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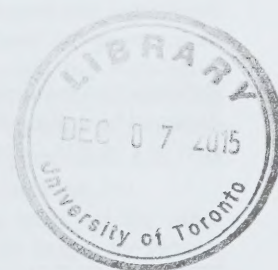
Mardi 1^{er} décembre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 1 December 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1^{er} décembre 2015

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ENERGY STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
DES LOIS SUR L'ÉNERGIE

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 30, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning / Projet de loi 135, Loi modifiant plusieurs lois et abrogeant plusieurs règlements en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'énergie et la planification énergétique à long terme.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Mr. Speaker, long-term energy planning is essential to a clean, reliable and affordable energy future. Ontarians have been clear that they want to play a larger role in our government's long-term energy planning process. The government has listened and introduced the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015.

If passed, this legislation, as we've heard throughout debate, would ensure a consistent, transparent long-term planning process is followed. It would enshrine in law a requirement for extensive consultation with the public, stakeholders and aboriginal groups in the development of energy plans, as is already standard practice, and amend the Green Energy Act, 2009, to introduce two new initiatives to help Ontario families, businesses and the province as a whole conserve energy and water to manage costs. It would support increased competition and enhanced ratepayer value by empowering the IESO to undertake competitive processes for transmitter selection or procurement when appropriate.

In 2010 and in 2013, our government developed long-term energy plans, also called LTEPs, to guide energy planning and advance energy policy initiatives. These LTEPs set out comprehensive direction for the energy sector and were developed through an extensive consultation process with consumers, stakeholders and aboriginal groups throughout the province.

The proposed legislation would enshrine this LTEP process to ensure that energy planning is done transparently and pragmatically and that LTEPs are developed consistent with the principles of cost-effectiveness, reliability, clean energy, community and aboriginal engagement, and an emphasis on conservation and demand management. This would replace the lengthy and cumbersome integrated power system planning process that is currently in place.

Just yesterday, during second reading debate, the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane said, "I'm going to be the last speaker from our side, and hopefully this time the government will actually allow this bill to go through a real, true committee process...."

We allowed debate to continue when we reached 6.5 hours of debate on this bill so that more members would have an opportunity to present their views on the bill. The bill has now seen well over 10 hours of debate. According to my count, over half of the members of this Legislature have spoken to the bill. There has been considerable debate on this bill and we have heard a wide range of viewpoints, opinions and perspectives. I agree with the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane that it's time that this bill be put to a vote for second reading and hopefully be referred to committee where the important work takes place.

In committee, members of all parties will hear from stakeholders that have an interest in this bill. Members of the public will be able to provide their important input on this bill. And in committee, members will have an opportunity to move amendments to strengthen the bill. At the same time, this House can move on to debate other substantive matters.

There are a number of pieces of important legislation that have already been introduced which the government would like to debate and move through the legislative process. I'll make some examples: Bill 100, Supporting Ontario's Trails Act; Bill 119, the Health Information Protection Act, a very important bill; and Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act.

We'd like to spend time debating some of the other important pieces of legislation currently before the House, but we can't do that until Bill 135 is referred to committee for further debate. As a result, Mr. Speaker, I move that this question be put now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I appreciate hearing from the member and your justification. However, it's my opinion right now that this particular bill does require further debate, so I will not allow the closure motion at this point in time.

To the member: You still have the floor.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I will yield the floor.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I appreciate the member's enthusiasm about closing off debate.

I want to quote the dean of the Legislature, the member for St. Catharines, Jim Bradley, who was elected in 1977. He'll soon be celebrating his 40th anniversary in the Legislature. On many occasions, I have quoted him when he has talked about the fact that closure motions choke off debate. I think one of the great things in our Westminster parliamentary systems is the fact that we have robust debate, that we have an opportunity to debate bills before this House. I happen to agree with the member for St. Catharines, the chair of caucus, Mr. Bradley, and I think more and more this government is governing by closure motion.

I really believe that in this environment—we saw yesterday a number of bills from all parties, private members' bills, go to committee and have some hearings. But on this bill, I think there are a number of members who, from our caucus at least, have not had the opportunity. In fact, the vast majority of our caucus members have yet to be on the record on Bill 135.

Given this government's misguided energy policies, given the fact that, for example, 80% of Ontarians don't support their misguided plan to sell Hydro One, I think it's appropriate, as an opposition party, that we're given—and I think I can speak on behalf of the other opposition party, the New Democrats, that we need to have this debate here today. We need to make sure that the concerns of our constituents get on the floor, especially when it comes to this government's energy policy.

I'm glad today that debate will continue, and I look forward to some of the other issues and matters being placed on the floor this morning.

0910

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's a pleasure to stand up and give my questions and comments. That's kind of an interesting twist today, Speaker. The member from York South–Weston has proposed that we close debate, and you've overruled that and allowed us to continue to debate. That is important, because I know there are many members in this House who still haven't had the opportunity to have their thoughts toward this bill put on the record. It's very important.

As we talk about this bill, it's about energy. That is a hot topic in Ontario. It is a hot topic in ridings all over Ontario. There was a town hall just recently that we had on Sunday, I believe it was, Sunday afternoon, and the number of people who attended was surprising; we're talking over 150 people. This government is selling off Hydro. We had the first tranche a little while ago, and people are still asking, "How can we stop the sale of Hydro?" They're not giving up. Debating Bill 135 is part

of that conversation on energy, and I think we need to continue that debate.

The member from York South–Weston also talked about transparency and being pragmatic. We believe in being transparent. Having full debate on bills is another avenue, another path to take to be transparent. It can happen on the government side: Their members could actually take their full time to debate this bill. That would be transparent. They would get their thoughts out to their community. Then on this side, us taking our time: When we have a 20-minute debate or a 10-minute debate, not sharing it, speed debating; we're taking that time to be transparent about what's happening in our ridings, what feedback we'd like to give this government and what we criticize about this bill so that we can all have that full-size debate. Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Speaker. It's good to see you in the chair this morning, bright-eyed and—whatever the saying is.

I just wanted to add to the member from York South–Weston's comments this morning, or speech. I spoke yesterday, and I'm going to be around the same lines. We seem to be very repetitious. As we debate some legislation, we seem to sway, and I get that. We're all elected here, and we all have an opportunity to express what either our party or we ourselves want to put forward. That's great, but in some cases I think it's just for the sake of speaking and not adding anything to debate.

Speaker, you know and I know that it's important, once again, to express our opinion here. But it's also important to send pieces of legislation to committee, because that's when folks from outside of these four walls have an opportunity to come and talk to us as legislators about what's important to them and what's crucial, things that we need to address.

When we say we want to listen to our communities, we want to listen to Ontarians, that's a good place to be. I get calls from folks in my riding who express their opinions. But when it comes to the collective piece, I think it's also important that they talk to us across party lines on what's important. So I would hope that we send this stuff to committee and get that important work done so that we can move on instead of just being repetitious.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to stand and join the debate through questions and comments on Bill 135 because there's much to be said. I fear that this government is on a track. Trend after trend is showing that they're taking democracy away not only from us, as opposition, but the third party and all of Ontario. I hope people in this province realize the conundrum that's happening here, because this government has proven themselves to be incompetent. When they take democracy out of our hands, we see gaffes, if you will.

For instance, just last week, by regulation there was going to be a particular move with regard to a regulation

made through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. And then, within 24 hours, it was repealed. That's what happens when democracy is removed from debating an issue so that thoughtfulness can be added to this whole situation.

Bill 135 is taking the independence away, if you will, from IESO as well. We're losing the oversight that this government has proven time and again that they need. In terms of oversight, you know, it's interesting. We continuously say on this side of the House that the Liberal Party of today doesn't have a revenue problem; they have a spending problem. Because of that, they turn to the taxpayer time and again. The energy audit is just one example coming out of this bill we cannot agree with.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from York South–Weston for final comments.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I want to thank the member from Leeds–Grenville, the member from London–Fanshawe, the member from Northumberland–Quinte West and the member from Huron–Bruce for their comments.

I really hope that, at this point, we're going to hear new viewpoints, we're going to hear new opinions, we're going to hear new perspectives on this bill. I look forward to an interesting debate with new constructive criticism, new notions, new suggestions and new initiatives that can be added to this bill, because I don't look forward to, to put it as the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound often says, the same old. Democracy is about knowing when we have spoken enough and when we have nothing new to add. So I really look forward to all these new initiatives, these new notions, these new viewpoints and these opinions that will be coming from the continuation of this debate.

I think that it's important not only to hear ourselves; I think it's important to hear from the stakeholders who really have an interest in this bill. I think it's really important to hear from the public. We can only do that at committee. I think that's where the members have the opportunity to move amendments so we can really strengthen the legislation. So that, Mr. Speaker, is why I had suggested that after 10 hours, we could reflect on what is new to say, what is left to say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I really appreciate the opportunity today to discuss Bill 135. Bill 135, however, I don't think can just be discussed in the context of what's before us in terms of this bill. I actually think we have to have a larger discussion in the province of Ontario with respect to our hydro system, grid capacity, the choices we make in order to supply that grid, and the choices that the government has made in terms of taking away and removing independence in the electricity sector and thereby, I believe, eroding the confidence that Ontarians have in our electricity system.

I'll give you one example before I start. It is the cancelled gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville. Those two cancelled gas plants were sited by the government.

When there was enough public outcry, they decided, in the middle of an election, to cancel those gas plants at the cost to the Ontario taxpayer and ratepayer of \$1.2 billion. As I used to say when I was the energy critic, Dalton McGuinty spent more money to win the 2011 election than Barack Obama did to become the leader of the free world.

I want to put that in context and I want to leave that out there for the time being because I think it's relevant in the sense that this has become a Liberal government that has used energy policy for its own electoral gain, and it has eroded, as I said earlier, the confidence of Ontarians. I look at, for example, Bill 135. It's doing something similar to what happened with the cancelled gas plants in that it will remove independence from the IESO, the independent electricity supply organization; I think I've got that right.

0920

The IESO has been—I think we've all known for quite some time—critical in the long-term planning of the province's energy supply. It has been critical in having an independent voice so that the decisions that are made are made in the best interests of Ontario ratepayers, not in the best interests of the Ontario Liberal government.

That is the crux of this bill and why we are so concerned with it, because the Liberal government views the energy sector in the province of Ontario as an extension of itself. That is not within the best interests of the province nor of the people that I represent from the city of Ottawa in Nepean–Carleton.

I would also like just to point out the fact that the long-term energy plan—or, as I'll refer to it, the LTEP—is something that the government has drafted from time to time and includes the IESO on, yet rarely ever follows through on any of its energy planning. I can talk about the mix, for one second, of energy in the province. When you look at, for example, the nuclear mix and also the gas mix—we've eliminated coal, and that's something that we're proud of on the Progressive Conservative side because that was done by our colleague, Elizabeth Witmer, when she was Minister of Energy, I believe. Of course, I have a seatmate who is a former Minister of Energy who also did a great deal of work and has a very proud legacy within this province of being in the best interests of the people.

I will say this to my dear friend and my wonderful colleague from Simcoe–Grey, who is also the House leader: He was in charge of our electricity supply on 9/11. When that was hitting North America and when there were dangers south of the border, he was the person who had the decision-making authority to keep our nuclear facilities in this province safe. For that, I think we owe him a debt of gratitude. I want to say thank you to him.

But let's get back to the long-term planning of the energy supply in this province. This bill, Bill 135, and the cancelled gas plants that the Liberals have brought in and the fact that they brought in wind power, which is very costly and driving up hydro rates across the province—I know, for example, the Speaker has a red-light district in

his constituency. Red light in his constituency is not the same as in Amsterdam; the red light district in Leamington is because there are so many wind turbines that at night, all you see are red flashing lights. That's what the Speaker has to contend with every day because of this Liberal government. Now I see that Justin Trudeau, boy wonder, is going to expand this disaster right across the country. God help the other provinces who have not had to be part of this.

In the moments I have left, I want to touch on something else before I expand a little bit more on the IESO. What I want to talk about are these mandatory energy audits for homes. In 2009, my colleague John Yakabuski, who was then our energy critic and who is now our energy critic today, fought on the floor of this assembly and demanded that these energy audits be removed from the Green Energy Act, and he was successful. He was successful because it was the will of the people of the province who spoke up and said, "We can't afford this. This isn't something that we think is necessary." The people of this province agreed with him. Therefore, he pressured the Liberals to eliminate these mandatory home audits.

Here we see the Liberal government, years later—that bill was in 2009; we're now in 2015. The government is now engaging in this again. That, to me, speaks to the lack of ability that this government has with respect to energy. I also note that with Bill 135, we are again eroding the independence in the electricity system to benefit this Liberal government.

What happens when the government of the day has more influence in the electricity sector than it should? When I say "than it should," I simply mean that there is not an energy expert over there. In fact, I believe that the only person in this entire assembly who has actually worked in one of Ontario's nuclear facilities is Bill Walker, who is the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and who sits on the opposition benches. He has probably more knowledge on the energy file than all of the other members put together over there because he has worked on the front lines.

But I digress, because again, it brings us back to Bill 135, and the fact that Bill 135 erodes that independence and expert advice from the IESO to give more power and more control to the ministry, and, as a result of it being in the ministry, more control for the minister, who is not a trained scientist, nor should he be. I just make that point because we in Ontario require independent experts to run our energy system.

Now, what I find interesting—and my colleagues, I think, will agree—is that we just ran a federal election campaign, and we watched as young Justin Trudeau criss-crossed the country talking about Stephen Harper muzzling scientists. Well, if you want to see the reality and who wants to muzzle people in this country, it is this Liberal government, which has consistently muzzled the public by refusing to take bills through committee and through travel. They have consistently shut down debate in this assembly. I dare say that if we decided to do a

comparison or an analysis, we would find this government shuts down legislation far more than any other government in the country.

Finally, if you want to talk about muzzling experts, you look no further than this bill, because this bill, Bill 135—the proper name of this bill is the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, which will revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term planning. This bill is not going to muzzle scientists; it's actually just going to erode any independence. It is going to erode any expert advice and independent planning in our energy sector in the province of Ontario.

By the way, we have the highest energy rates in all of North America, and I don't blame anyone but the Liberal Party of Ontario for that. That is their fault, and it is only going to get worse if Bill 135 passes without amendment.

I want to congratulate our critic John Yakabuski from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for his long service here as our energy critic, now and in 2009, when he fought the home energy audits in the first place. I want to congratulate my seatmate, the former Minister of Energy, who worked so hard and tirelessly in order to keep our facilities secure during terrorist attacks just south of our border. And I want to thank all members for the opportunity to be part of this debate here, to engage in what I believe is a very fundamental issue for legislators here at Queen's Park, and one that we must continue to discuss.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm also pleased to join the debate. I think it's important to point out that what the government is doing with Bill 135 is they're removing the authority of the OEB in terms of their planning and approval for planning of electricity and electricity delivery in this province. They are removing their authority when it comes to planning and when it comes to approval.

However, the government will claim that when they sell off Hydro One and it becomes privatized, the OEB will be able to protect the consumer. In this bill, they're eroding the powers of the OEB. You can't have it both ways. On one hand, the government is saying, "Trust the OEB. We trust the OEB to ensure that the consumers are protected," but "We're going to continually remove the authority of the OEB. We're going to remove the powers of the OEB. We're going to weaken them." How, then, can the government say that the public will be protected by this organization, which ostensibly does have the hallmarks of accountability—it does provide some mechanisms for transparency, and it does provide some ability for oversight, but how can the government claim that the OEB will provide that oversight when they are actually eroding its power in this bill?

In addition, this bill is a continuing trend of the erosion of the OEB. This is not something that is beginning with Bill 135. With the sale of Hydro One, the government hasn't even submitted that privatization scheme to the OEB for independent review, for independent analysis. The government hasn't done that. This is just a con-

tinuation of a trend of the government continuing to remove powers from the OEB, to weaken the OEB, to take away an independent mechanism for planning electricity in a manner which is based on evidence and, instead, resulting in something that is going to put Ontario into a worse position.

0930

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'm going to be brief. We want to continue debate, and in the last half hour that I've been here, Speaker, I haven't heard anything new, so I really, really recommend that we move this on and let's get it to committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm confused, Speaker. He said we want to continue debate but then he said we want to get it to committee. Well, he's going to have to make up his mind.

I was glad to have the opportunity to be here this morning and listen to the member from Nepean–Carleton take part in this debate, this debate that is the epitome of practising democracy, giving us the opportunity to speak. I really appreciated her remarks, especially the ones about the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, of course, because I'm always waiting for those complimentary remarks from the members from the other side. I'm still waiting, but folks, we are in the Christmas season now. If you want to be charitable, I'm listening. I'm listening, because I always have good things to say about the folks on the other side.

But what I don't have good things to say about is how, when they stand in their place—I expect when the debate shifts over to the other side, we're going to hear the sound, the swoosh. We're going to hear the swoosh one more time—

Interjection: The guillotine.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —where the guillotine will drop and they will move closure on this bill.

This is an important piece of legislation. This fundamentally changes how we operate at the IESO and OEB, two supposedly independent agencies that are going to have so many of their powers taken away directly—directly—by the architects of the electricity and energy disaster we are currently suffering from in this province.

So, should I feel comfortable? No, I don't feel comfortable. Should the people of Ontario feel comfortable that this government is going to usurp the independence of the IESO and the OEB in this piece of legislation? I say nay, not so, sir. Nay, not so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'm thinking of our young pages this morning. When they go back to school, they're going to tell their teachers and their classmates about how well-educated they were at the provincial Parliament, because all the bills were time-allocated. "What an education we had. All they talked about was time allocation."

And here we are again, with the Liberals saying, "You don't trust us. You guys have said long enough about what you believe, and we believe differently." Well, the fact of the matter is, Speaker, that 80% of the people in Ontario—by the Liberals' own polling numbers; they can't refute them—are opposed to the sell-off of Hydro One. Nearly 200 of Ontario's 444 municipal councils have debated and voted motions opposed to the government's selling Hydro One.

So when the opposition parties stand up and say, "You guys aren't listening. You don't get it. You're forcing something on the people of Ontario that they don't want," they say, "Gosh, we better shut down debate, because what if more people hear what the opposition is saying? Those polling numbers will go higher. We can't go back to our ridings over the Christmas break and say, 'Oh, no, I forgot to tell you I was going to sell Hydro One when I asked for your vote. Please forgive me.'"

They're not going to be forgiven, Speaker. The people in Ontario don't want this. The people in Ontario want to hear the opposition parties tell them what's wrong with the bills that the government is bringing forward. When we try to do that, they say, "Ah, time out. We're going to shut down debate." That isn't right, Speaker. It isn't the democratic way and it shouldn't be tolerated in Ontario's provincial Parliament.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Nepean–Carleton for final comments.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to say thank you to my colleagues from Windsor West, from Bramalea–Gore–Malton—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Windsor–Tecumseh.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Windsor–Tecumseh; I apologize—from Northumberland–Quinte West, and of course from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

I think I've made my views on Bill 135 abundantly clear, so I'd like to actually respond to some of the comments that were made, if you'll indulge me, Speaker.

I want to first start with my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh. He talked about our pages, and he talked about the bills that we discuss and that they ought to be learning about, particularly this one here. I think it's important that they understand the energy mix and supply and how it's run in the province of Ontario.

But he made an even more valid point than just that. He said that we are shutting down debate quite a bit here. I think it's actually been unprecedented. I credit him with bringing this to the floor of the assembly, because I think it's important that we discuss all of the matters that are relevant to the people of the province.

My colleague from Northumberland–Quinte West: I do take umbrage with your suggestion that we should just move bills on because the Conservatives say the same thing and the NDP says the same thing. I want to say this to you, and I say this as somebody who has been on the opposition side for the past decade; this is very important and please do not forget it: The rules are in place to protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority. In the sense of this assembly, the rules are in place to pro-

tect people on this side of the aisle, whether they are Progressive Conservatives or New Democrats, so that we can stand in our place and, despite the decisions you may make, we can go home each weekend and let our constituents know that we have had our say and we are defending them. The rules are in place to allow us that. You are continually breaking the rules by enforcing closure. That is not fair. That is not the spirit of this place.

We want to continue to debate this bill. We want to continue to debate other issues like the sale of Hydro One, and you have consistently shut us down.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Further debate?

Mr. Mike Colle: Just to point out that I think the member from Nepean–Carleton reaffirmed the fact that she has nothing to say about Bill 135. She talked about how sad she is that her great leader was defeated in the federal election and she's so upset. That's what she talked about. She didn't talk about Bill 135—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order, the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: If the member opposite is going to quote me, perhaps he should actually read my speech and refer directly to it instead of making up false—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I would ask the member to withdraw the last comment.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Sure, I would withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I don't see that as a point of order.

Back to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence.

Mr. Mike Colle: As I was saying, if there were relevant points to be made about Bill 135, the Energy Statute Law Amendment Act, it would be worthwhile to hear, but when you just rattle on about how upset you are about the fact the people of Canada spoke loudly and clearly that they wanted a new government, that's not what this bill is about.

I think she proved the point, the member for Nepean–Carleton. We have had over 11 hours of debate; they have nothing else to say. We should now do what is the right thing and hear from the people who will be before committee, where there will be more debate, more analysis, and hear from the public to have their say on this important piece of legislation. An important part of this Legislature is the committee work. This bill should go to committee, where we bring in the experts and the stakeholders to have their say, and we have a debate that will continue there.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, after 11 hours, I put the question.

0940

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member for the valid points he has made. Again, earlier,

my ruling was that I wanted to allow debate to continue. I recognize the number of hours that we've had in terms of debate, but I also recognize and look at the number of members who have had an opportunity to debate. Therefore, I am not going to allow closure of debate on this particular bill at this point in time.

The member from Eglinton–Lawrence, you still have time left on the clock if you care to continue.

Mr. Mike Colle: No. I wish to move this to committee where we can hear from the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the opportunity to once again talk about Bill 135. My concern, however, is that we have just listened to about two minutes from the government and they didn't discuss the bill whatsoever. All they talked about was shutting down debate on removing the independence from the IESO. That's what this government just did.

They didn't talk about any of the content of the bill. They only talked about shutting down debate. That, I think, speaks volumes about what they're doing here in terms of eroding the independence. If the former minister—and I remind him of the reason he left government—would like to talk about why we have such a big concern here, it is because every time this government has an energy bill before this assembly, it ends up being catastrophic to the people of Ontario.

When this government talks about long-term energy planning, which is, by the way, in the title of the bill, I think that we deserve to have an opportunity to discuss the long-term energy plan. But unfortunately, the government wants to continually shut that down. That's all he spoke about. If he has nothing to say, perhaps he should have given some extra time to other members of this assembly who are concerned about the energy supply, the energy mix, the energy planning in this province, and who are concerned that the independence of the IESO is being eroded. I think that's necessary and I think that's important for future speakers to this bill.

Now, Speaker, I want to congratulate you as somebody who has allowed this debate to continue. As I've said here, and I believe that the member from Windsor–Tecumseh had mentioned, it's getting very frustrating here. We in the opposition are being vilified by the government for wanting to take the views of our constituents to the floor of this assembly. If we can't discuss that here without the government and the minister, and the former minister in particular, talking about the need for closure, then I don't know why we're still here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Once again, it's always a pleasure to stand in my place on behalf of the good people of Algoma–Manitoulin. It's a little frustrating listening to where this discussion is going this morning. I know I was looking forward to bringing the concerns and the views of the vast people across Algoma–Manitoulin

who are frustrated with some of the directions in which this government is taking our province.

Unfortunately, what we're seeing here again this morning is a closure. They're telling us, "Wait a second. Before we proceed with this, we don't agree with the views of Ontarians at this point in time." Mind you, as some of my colleagues indicated earlier, well over 85% of the province's individuals are against the direction this government is taking with the sell-off of Hydro One. Well over 180 municipalities have also done the same.

Having said all that, we're still going to listen to this government say, "Listen, we don't agree with what is going on. We're tired of hearing the opposition. We want to progress and move this into committee, so we're going to shut down debate." That's not right, because I have a lot of constituents who have a lot to offer in this debate. I have a lot of people who have approached me regularly, in the malls, at the Tim Hortons—we just had another event where a colleague of mine was up in Elliot Lake for "stop the sale of Hydro One," where we had a good portion of Elliot Lake people who were present.

I have received over 1,800 petitions where individuals were totally opposed to the direction this government is taking our province, and we're telling them, "Wait a second. We're going to shut down debate. Your views don't matter." That is absolutely wrong. That is undemocratic and that is not what this Legislature is all about. Debate should continue on and we should have a full, wholesome debate about what this particular bill is all about.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'm trying to earn my pay today, Speaker, as you can tell.

Yes, debate is important. Nobody would ever question that debate is important. But at the end of the debate, we should get some value from the debate, and I'm not so sure that's what I'm hearing today. We heard yesterday that we're prepared to move on. Well, today is a different story, Speaker. So I'm disappointed in that piece.

I respect views from the other side, Speaker; I want to make it very, very clear. But all that I'm saying is that I think we're spending this morning basically going around in circles. Personally, it's my opinion that time could be better used in committee to kind of smooth out the edges, if you may, Speaker, because frankly, yes, we could get upset about the federal election and the Newfoundland election of yesterday. We could talk about those things, Speaker, but the reality of the day is we want to be—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: What happened?

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: What happened? Oh, I think it's all Liberal governments from Ontario east, Minister. That kind of explains it.

Speaker, I really feel that we need to move on. There's debate in third reading, if you feel very, very strongly to revisit some things after the committee hearings. I really would encourage my fellow members from all sides of the House: Let's move on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I certainly am pleased to stand because I feel, as an opposition member, that I need to react to some of the comments that were being made.

It's interesting. The government has put forward that there are no new ideas coming forward. To that I say, shame on them. Specifically around the Green Energy Act, we have put forward, time and again, ideas on how to make life a little bit easier for Ontarians, whether it's their energy bills that are skyrocketing because of the unaffordable subsidies that are being paid out primarily to proponents of wind who tend to—if you follow the dotted line—be friends with the Liberal Party, or it is the ridiculousness about the energy audits.

Seniors who may have to sell their homes so that they have enough money in their bank account to pay for their long-term care are going to be hit with another bill. Think of the farmhouses; think of the seniors who have been in their homes for 20 or 30 years. Are they going to be able to afford new windows, a new furnace—the list goes on and on—when all they really should be caring about, because they have paved the way for us, is a comfortable retirement and knowing that they have the funds to pay for the care that they deserve and need in their senior years? This government has totally lost touch with Ontarians.

The other thing is that they say, "Let's get this bill into committee so the public is heard." Speaker, I would suggest to you that the public needs to be heard before legislation is ever developed. Yesterday I was embarrassed to sit across from this government because, when we were addressing Bill 122 in the general government committee, time and again, stakeholders were saying, "We only heard about this a week and a half ago."

Speaker, this government has gone off the rails and they're taking the province with them. It's unacceptable and it needs to stop.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member for Eglinton—Lawrence for final comments.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'll be brief again. The debate process continues. We should invite members of our constituency to come to committee. We should debate it at committee, and there's also third reading debate. By the way, Mr. Speaker, we had zero third reading debate time when the Harris government was in power—no third reading debate. We're offering third reading debate also.

So let's hear from the people and send it to committee where the work will be done with the experts and the members of the public. Let's move it to committee, and then on to third reading debate, hopefully.

0950

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Chiarelli has moved second reading of Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I will repeat for clarification purposes: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

A recorded vote being required, it will be deferred until after question period today.

Second reading vote deferred.

WEARING OF FOOTBALL JERSEY

Hon. Michael Gravelle: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that the Premier be permitted to wear an Edmonton Eskimos jersey and provide a brief statement regarding the Grey Cup before question period today, Tuesday, December 1, 2015.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Agreed? Agreed.

SMART GROWTH FOR OUR
COMMUNITIES ACT, 2015LOI DE 2015 POUR UNE CROISSANCE
INTELLIGENTE DE NOS COLLECTIVITÉS

Mr. McMeekin moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act / Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the minister for leadoff.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Thanks very much, Mr. Speaker. I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, Lou Rinaldi—a very hard-working fellow; I'm very proud of Lou. He has been carrying a lot of the load over in municipal affairs and housing with some considerable distinction, and I want that said for the record.

I rise to begin third reading debate on the proposed Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015. I'm very proud of Bill 73. During second reading, I discussed how land use planning in Ontario is very much like a large jigsaw puzzle. When my daughters were younger, we used to spend hours together at the cottage working on jigsaw puzzles. They used to tease me by hiding pieces of the puzzle. They wouldn't admit that they had set them aside, and suddenly they would appear. As a family, our puzzle strategy was to start by establishing the outside frame, then filling in from there.

In many ways, it's a great analogy to describe what Bill 73 represents. If passed, Bill 73 would better ensure that Ontario's continued and ongoing growth is managed properly, and it would allow municipalities to recover more development charges for transit services. For

example, Waterloo, Ottawa, and York region combined could see increases in transit funding from development charges that are well over \$100 million per year. Needless to say, this would greatly help municipalities manage their growth more effectively.

Of course, you can't force a puzzle piece into a spot where it doesn't fit, so we have heard hours of debate by members of all parties so as to make some changes. At the committee, we heard from people and organizations from across Ontario on our proposed changes, and we listened. After hearing these views and perspectives, our government brought forward a number of amendments to the bill. These amendments make it stronger, more flexible and reflective of the diversity of our communities.

Our government introduced an amendment, for example, that would allow the public and stakeholders to have more time to review background studies on development charges. This would make the development charges system more transparent than it currently is.

We also heard that some municipalities, mostly smaller municipalities, are not supportive of the proposed two-year freeze on amendments to an official plan or zoning bylaw. So we brought forward a change that would authorize councils, and only councils, to permit by resolution applications to be made during their respective time-out periods.

The committee has also accepted amendments that would strengthen the proposed bill even further. I want to acknowledge some other things that we heard at committee. I've heard some say that we should have included inclusionary zoning. In particular, I want to thank the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore and the member from Parkdale–High Park for their continued advocacy on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that planning and housing are linked and that we can't complete this puzzle without making sure that we have a healthy supply of affordable housing in Ontario. We believe that issues related to affordable housing, including inclusionary zoning, would be best considered through the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy that we are currently updating—and working very hard at updating, by the way. I think that when members of the House see it, they'll be pleased with the progress that we've made.

Ontario's growth is a complex puzzle with many, many pieces. Passing Bill 73 is a crucial part of making sure that this puzzle comes together. We've got to continue to fill in the inside pieces through the Honourable David Crombie's upcoming report on the coordinated review and greenbelt growth plans, through our Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy and through the pending review of the Ontario Municipal Board, which is very, very important.

With that said, I'd like to turn it over to my esteemed friend, Mr. Rinaldi.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I want to thank the minister for allowing me the opportunity to work with him to make

sure that we come up with a piece of legislation that is going to make a difference for Ontarians.

Preserving our lands and building on rural and agricultural success is vital as the province grows. The proposed Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, if passed, would help our smaller communities and rural municipalities grow and thrive. This means that municipalities would be able to tailor their public engagement policies to meet their communities' needs. If Bill 73 is passed, there would be more opportunities for public input into the planning process.

Now, we have heard lots of feedback on the planning rules. This proposed legislation would provide for citizen representatives to be included in municipal planning advisory committees. Northern and lower-tier municipalities would continue to have these committees at their discretion.

Sustainable growth means considering the views of all Ontarians. Municipalities would need to set out in their official plans how and when the public would be consulted, and explain how the input received by councils affected their planning decisions.

We want to help ensure a more predictable planning system by helping all municipalities engage the public of Ontario. This means more control over official plans will remain at the local level.

1000

We know that official plan reviews take time and resources. This is especially true in smaller communities, which have lower growth pressures and therefore require less frequent changes to planning documents compared to large urban centres. That's why, if Bill 73 is passed, new official plans would only need to be reviewed every 10 years instead of the current five-year cycle. Being a former mayor of one of these small municipalities, this is welcome news.

The act will also allow for things to be worked out locally before being sent to the Ontario Municipal Board. We will do this by providing an option for additional time to resolve issues involving municipal planning documents. Municipalities will be allowed the time to engage in alternative dispute resolution, and the ability to appeal some items would be removed. This form of local control is particularly important to smaller communities. We are ensuring that the planning system is streamlined to enable efficient, stable growth in Ontario. The community will be better able to set out their vision for development, and it provides greater certainty about the form and shape of development.

Being smart about how we manage growth is the best way we can ensure that Ontario communities of all sizes and from all regions are sustainable. Mr. Speaker, I join Minister McMeekin in supporting Bill 73, and I urge all members to vote for the passage of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? I recognize the member from Nepean—or from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You got it, Speaker. Thank you very much.

It's just a wonderful opportunity to speak to Bill 73 this morning, which the government—the minister and the PA—just spoke to very briefly. I didn't hear a whole lot about the bill through their address, but then again, they don't speak much about their legislation. They have a different philosophy: table it, ram it through, deal with the consequences. But, unfortunately, it's the people of Ontario who always have to deal with the consequences of legislation that is rammed through without being properly debated or thought through.

I know I've used this cliché in the House before, but I like to do it because my son is an apprentice carpenter. They have a rule: Measure twice, cut once. You understand it because, if you cut that two-by-four too short, it's not going to work. It's just not going to work. But if you measure it a couple of times to be sure of the exact size, and you make that cut, it's going to be a custom fit, and you're going to be able to continue on with your work. But if you take a piece of legislation, and you take shortcuts, and you mess up—which is the habit of this government. They are probably the leading government in history when it comes to messing up. They're leading; in fact, they would win an Olympic gold medal for messing up, if there was one to be given out.

I want to talk about the land transfer tax. We're going to have a chance to talk about that on Thursday afternoon when my colleague from Leeds–Grenville brings his motion. This is a municipal issue, and I say to the minister, don't—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I really enjoy and appreciate your enthusiasm, but I would ask that you direct your comments to the Chair as opposed to something that may be perceived as antagonistic towards the other side. So if you would direct your comments to me, I would appreciate it. Thank you. You had 15 seconds.

I will give him 15 seconds on the clock.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Chair, I'll say to the minister, through you: Don't tax my dream and the dream of every young family in this province by instituting another tax on the sale of a home. That's wrong. Don't do it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Oh, Speaker, why do I get the short straw? I've got to try and follow the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Sometimes life isn't fair, Speaker. How do you top anything that Mr. Yakabuski says, with the passion that he delivers his theatrical presentations in this Parliament? He is above and beyond. He is exceptional, I must say.

And Speaker, I must say, I thought you were the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek there for a minute this morning, bringing your own members to order in this House—doing a good job up there.

In reference to what we've heard so far this morning from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and his parliamentary assistant, I must say that I thoroughly enjoyed being on the committee when this bill went through clause-by-clause hearing. It was a real eye-opener, I have to tell you that, because I thought that

when we listened to the delegations, we would actually listen to the delegations and put into the bill some of the great ideas that they brought forward. Well—

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: And we did.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yes, you did, all right.

As I say, it was an eye-opener and I thoroughly enjoyed it. I heard the minister talk today about the fun he had putting puzzles together. Well, I was a bit puzzled at committee as to why we didn't do more and put more into it.

I am looking forward, very much, as we all are in the New Democratic caucus, to finally get something going on inclusionary zoning. The promise has been put out there. The member from Etobicoke—Lakeshore is finally going to get his private member's bill passed, I hope, after we heard so many times—our member from Parkdale—High Park has tried five or six times. It hasn't happened yet. We can all work together. That's what this House is about.

Thank you for your time this morning, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I am pleased to add a few comments to the speech by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and his parliamentary assistant, the great member from Northumberland—Quinte West.

It's interesting; they both have a municipal background like myself. I would say to you that Bill 73, the proposed Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, proposes changes to the Planning Act and the Development Charges Act. Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, coming from the municipal world, the most important job that municipal councillors do is related to the Planning Act, and the most controversial item that municipal councils get themselves involved in is the Planning Act because it's probably one of the toughest pieces of legislation to write by the ministry—to encompass all the small towns, rural municipalities, upper-tier municipalities and the urban centres that we have across Ontario. You have to write a piece of legislation that is broad-based. Therefore, it's a forever-changing process, because municipalities see continuous growth. We see new technologies. We see all kinds of issues where municipalities don't want to grow and they want to protect their green spaces.

If you look at this act, it provides some more opportunities for those municipalities to make some good decisions. Is it perfect? Probably not, because it's very difficult to capture every little town and municipality that we have in this province. But I think the minister has done a fine job by consulting the community extensively over a long period of time and brought back a piece of legislation that updates the process.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm happy to provide a couple of minutes of comment on Bill 73. It's nice that we've heard from so many members this morning who have had previous municipal government experience. I look forward to comments, when this bill gets called again, from our very experienced member for Oxford, who is our critic.

I think the member previous from Scarborough—Rouge River really made a good point, the fact that it is difficult. This bill will be supported by some in the municipal sector; it will be opposed by some. I know I still have a number of concerns from this particular ministry.

As was mentioned by my friend from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, I've got a motion here on Thursday in private members' business that would put a stop to an imposition of any new municipal land transfer taxes, which I believe would be devastating in our municipalities. I believe it would pit municipality against municipality. I hope that either the minister or the parliamentary assistant would affirm that the government will support my motion on Thursday so that we can give a clear message to our municipal partners that this isn't a part of any future Municipal Act changes.

I would also just like to put on the record my concern that was expressed in the budget about the eastern Ontario growth plan that this government is proposing. I have serious and grave concerns about this government trying to change the way that planning is dealt with in eastern Ontario.

Since 2006, my riding of Leeds—Grenville has had very slow growth except for municipalities like North Grenville, which borders on the city of Ottawa. I would be very concerned if the government would make moves that would restrict growth in Leeds—Grenville. My municipalities are open for business and I want to keep it that way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the minister for final comments.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I want to thank all those honourable members who took a couple of minutes to reflect on the importance of this legislation—legislation that has been significantly forged in the fires of consultation. We've spoken to everybody about this and it has had extensive additional review in the committee. I realize not everybody got everything they may have wanted and there are still some things out there that need to happen. Excellence is always the enemy of the good, I suppose.

This is good legislation. This is going to make a difference in municipalities. AMO likes it. We even made several of the changes AMO wanted made to ensure that they liked it. It speaks to the interests of small municipalities and larger municipalities, and it does so in a way that empowers citizens—who are often justifiably cynical about any government, and sometimes particularly municipal government—to be transformed into an engaged citizenry that will give guidance to their municipalities. When they take that guidance, and that's reflected through official plans, the municipalities will be protected from those inappropriate interventions by other stakeholders, perhaps in the development industry. I think that's good. I'm told by them that development stakeholders like this because it provides some stability.

We'll move forward with some of the other issues that have been raised and we'll do those other issues—we'll do them right, okay? I promise you that.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd like to thank all members for a good debate this morning.

Since it is now close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

GREY CUP

LA COUPE GREY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Premier on a point of order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Yesterday in Paris, Alberta Premier Rachel Notley told me that, really, to honour our wager, all I really needed to say is that Alberta is awesome, Edmonton is awesome and that they have an awesome football team. She might have said that they have an awesome Premier, but I thought that was a bit of a digression. I'm going to honour our wager in this way.

Of course, the hopes that we Ontarians held for a fairy tale ending to the second season of our beloved Ottawa Redblacks were dashed on Sunday night in Winnipeg. Both teams brought their A game but Edmonton prevailed. And so I wear this Edmonton jersey, happily, to salute the courageous efforts of our beloved Redblacks, who all season long inspired us and who took to the field for Sunday's big match with such promise, and to salute the perseverance of the Redblacks' Edmonton foes, who, with characteristic prairie grit, came from behind to grind out the big win.

In honour of Edmonton's 14th Grey Cup win and in the spirit of all that unites us as Canadians, I've made a personal donation to an Alberta charity assisting with the settlement of Syrian refugees, and I made this on behalf of Premier Notley.

Au nom de la première ministre Notley, je félicite Edmonton, qui a remporté la Coupe Grey, en faisant un don personnel à un organisme de bienfaisance de l'Alberta qui aide à l'établissement de réfugiés syriens.

Fourteen Grey Cup wins is impressive and something for Edmonton to be very proud of. We here in Ontario's capital city would know, because Toronto has hoisted the Grey Cup 16 times. My point is that there's always next year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is my understanding, for clarity purposes for all members, that there was unanimous consent for the Premier to wear the jersey and that I would not have the Sergeant-at-Arms escort her out for doing so.

For the purposes of carrying on, it's now time for introductions.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a guest from Scarborough—Agincourt: Don Perry, who is the parent of page captain Aislin Perry. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Today we have with us a number of students representing the Ontario Undergraduate Student

Alliance, and I'd just like to acknowledge them. We have Chris Fernlund from Trent Durham Student Association; Jessica Guarini from the Trent Durham Student Association; Antonio Sergi from the Brock University Students' Union; Kyle Rose from the Brock University Students' Union; Lindsee Perkins from Western University Students' Council; Sophie Helpard from Western University Students' Council; Stéphane Hamade from the Waterloo Federation of Students; Olivia Matthews from the Wilfrid Laurier University Students' Union; Tyler Lively from Queen's Alma Mater Society; and Armin Escher from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to introduce two groups visiting us today at question period. From my great riding of Oakville, we've got the grade 8 students from Maple Grove Public School.

We're also joined today by some of my team from the Ministry of Labour. I'd like to welcome to Queen's Park, from the ministry, Tressa Alan, Alison Silveira, Laura Davidson and Catherine Virgo. Please welcome them to Queen's Park.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the member from Halton.

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent for all members to be permitted to wear ribbons in recognition of World AIDS Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Halton is seeking unanimous consent to wear the ribbons for World AIDS Day. Do we agree? Agreed.

ORAL QUESTIONS

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Patrick Brown: My question is for the Premier. Since the Auditor General's report about the winter road maintenance contracts, the government has done nothing but brag about buying new equipment to prop up the failed agreements. The Minister of Transportation said that they have supplied over 100 new pieces of equipment to clear the roads. Yet, yesterday, his press secretary said that the province never purchased any equipment for road maintenance contractors. Mr. Speaker, will the Premier clarify: Did the government pay for the sanders and the plows, and how many did the government pay for?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the question. I've had the opportunity on a number of occasions over the last few months to speak here in the Legislature about this important topic. Of course, I believe the leader of that party would know

that when the auditor produced her report a number of months ago, she had eight recommendations regarding how we can improve the winter maintenance program that the ministry runs.

In addition to that, what I pointed out repeatedly in this House is that, prior to the auditor being called in by the standing committee to conduct her investigation, there were, over the course of two winter seasons prior to that, 105 pieces of equipment that were added to both northern and southern Ontario area maintenance contracts—105 pieces of equipment. For example, in the north that equipment helped with truck climbing and passing lanes, and in the south that equipment—50 or 55 pieces—helped with clearing ramps and shoulders quicker.

I look forward to the follow-up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier, because I can't seem to get an answer from the Minister of Transportation. On April 29, the minister tweeted "50: the number of additional winter maintenance vehicles added to southern Ontario's roads since 2012." Another tweet: "55: the number of additional winter maintenance vehicles added to northern Ontario's roads since 2012." A third tweet summed it up: "MTO has added more than 100 pieces of snow-clearing equipment since 2012...."

Where are those 105 pieces of equipment the minister claims MTO added? If the Ministry of Transportation, and therefore the taxpayers, paid for those specific pieces, why do we not own them? Why were they given away?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, it's a very, very—
Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean—Carleton will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I'm waiting for silence so that I can hear the answer.

Please.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, again, I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Opposition on this important topic. I'm going to try to be as clear as I possibly can. In winter 2012-13, the Ministry of Transportation, working our area maintenance contractors, added 55 pieces of equipment. In winter season 2013-14, we added another 50 pieces of equipment across the province of Ontario. And in the year since the Auditor General's report, we've added—I think it's in the neighbourhood of 37 plus 16, so another 53 pieces of equipment that we've added. So, in total, from winter 2012-13 until today, we've added 158 pieces of equipment across the province of Ontario.

Like all of the equipment that's deployed, both that which we've added since 2012 and that which existed with all of our area maintenance contractors—of course, we work with our contractors to make sure that equipment is out on the roads and highways of the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, again to the Premier: Straight from the Auditor General's report, the total cost to the ministry of additional units of equipment negotiated with the contractors was \$15 million a year. And again, I repeat, yesterday the government said that they never purchased a new piece of equipment.

This Liberal government has a history of not asking for receipts when they give away millions of dollars. Did the minister here do the same thing the Minister of Education did? Did the contractors give them receipts, pictures? Has he even seen the vehicles or did the minister just hand over millions of dollars? What did you do?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.
Minister.

1040

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Speaker, it's a little bit difficult for me to understand exactly what the Leader of the Opposition is trying to get at here. Again, I'll be very clear. Going back over the last couple of years, we have now added cumulatively—both prior to the auditor's report and since—158 pieces of equipment.

What happens with the way that our contracts are structured is that we effectively pay our contractors for service. They are required to fulfill their equipment complement to provide that service, which means that we pay a contract price to the contractor and they, in turn, purchase or lease the equipment itself to satisfy what's required. There is nothing that should be confusing about this, but fundamentally, we are delivering—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark, come to order.

Do you have a wrap-up, please?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I was saying, Speaker, 158 new pieces of equipment across all of Ontario since winter 2012-13, which, working with our contractors, means that we'll continue to provide the winter maintenance program.

I'm happy to have a conversation with the leader offline if he wants a better understanding of why he's confused about this topic.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier, since the Minister of Transportation won't answer a simple question: The Auditor General was able to show us that the government paid \$1.7 million to buy 13 pieces of equipment for the lowest bidder on a \$700,000 contract.

We've now learned that four similar road maintenance contracts have failed, so the government spins this by denying they bought any new equipment. But then they say they gave money to these companies to buy new plows. It wasn't a loan, grant or subsidy; it was simply trying to hide the government's failures.

Mr. Speaker, will the government ask to be repaid for the equipment or will the equipment be returned? You

can't simply give the money away and see no proof for it. What will the government do?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Transportation will want to, once more, answer the detailed question that the Leader of the Opposition is asking. But at the base of this question should be a concern about keeping our roads in Ontario the safest in North America, which is what they are. Year after year—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Actually, Mr. Speaker, year after year, our roads are among the safest in North America, at the top or first or second. The standards that we have in place are the highest possible. We work—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew, second time.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We work with the contractors, and I would think the Leader of the Opposition would want to see new equipment where it's necessary, would want to see that equipment deployed, in order to keep those high standards in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: In 2009 the Liberal government decided to switch the procurement process. Regardless of whether they had the equipment to do the job, the lowest bidder got the deal. Then the government would bail them out if they didn't have equipment. As a direct result of this switch, Ontarians' lives were put at risk. That's what this is about. In an effort to cover their tracks, the Liberals handed out millions of dollars' worth of vehicles.

Will the Liberals switch back to the PC model of contracting winter road maintenance before they have to bail out another company with taxpayer dollars?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: The Premier, in her answer just a second ago, cited a statistic that's very important for everybody to remember. Over the last 13 years, Ontario's roads and highways have ranked first or second across all North American jurisdictions for safety.

Prior to the Auditor General coming in to do her investigation, the Ministry of Transportation had already embarked on adding equipment and improving the winter maintenance program. Since the auditor released her recommendations, all eight of them have been accepted by the ministry.

We continue to work with our contractors. We're adding equipment, we're improving service and we're giving people the service that they expect and deserve.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: We don't need a snow job from the Minister of Transportation. Under Progressive Conservative standards, road-clearing times were down to a little over two hours. When the

Liberals switched to "the lowest bidder wins the contracts," road-clearing times more than doubled. In fact, six of the 20 contract areas didn't even meet the generous and lenient provincial standards.

In typical fashion, this government tried to throw money at their problem, without a real solution. Well, I have a solution. Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, why won't the government return to the PC procurement model that kept roads clear and Ontarians safe?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It is regrettable but I guess not surprising that the Leader of the Opposition would decide to spout off corny slogans and play a little bit of politics with an important issue.

What I've said consistently over the last number of months is that this Premier and this government, accepting all eight recommendations that were released by the auditor, are moving forward. We are deploying, in conjunction with our contractors, more equipment. We have more liquid and materials out there on our highways, and everybody is ready to take on the winter season that we find ourselves in right now.

Again, I would stress that over the last 13 years here in the province of Ontario, our roads and highways, through all seasons, have ranked first and second across North America for safety. It doesn't mean that our work ends; it means that we keep working hard with our contractors, with our municipal partners, with all communities to make sure we deliver highway maintenance—winter, fall, summer and spring—that the people of Ontario deserve.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. The Premier needs to come clean with Ontarians and tell them where the money from the sell-off of Hydro One is actually going. First, she said she's using that money for infrastructure; now, her fall economic statement says the government is using that money for a one-time improvement in the deficit numbers. Will the Premier and her government be breaking the promise that they made to Ontarians to build transit, just so they can balance the budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party knows full well that the money that we will realize by broadening the ownership of Hydro One is being invested in transportation infrastructure. She knows that.

She knows that the projects that are being built around the province are critical to the communities in this province and she knows that there is more that needs to be done, whether it's roads, whether it's bridges in our northern and rural communities, whether it's waste water systems or whether it is transit projects.

I will say to the leader of the third party that I would have thought, given that the Paris conference is going on right now and there's a global conversation about how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, that she would have been supportive of the investment in transit infrastructure that will help us to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions

and will help us to develop innovative technology that we can export to the world so that we can work to save this planet.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, selling Hydro One is short-sighted. It doesn't build transit; it leaves people paying more and it puts the brakes on job creation in this province.

The fall economic statement says, "The province's total revenue projection ... is \$1.2 billion higher than the 2015 budget forecast. This increase largely reflects ... the recent Hydro One initial public offering." But then the minister stood up in this Legislature and said, "We are not relying on assets in order to manage our deficit." Well, which is it?

My question is simple. When this government continues to say one thing and do the other, how can Ontarians trust what they're saying about the sell-off of Hydro One?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will come to order.
Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have been very clear that we were broadening the ownership of Hydro One as part of a plan to have the revenue to be able to invest in infrastructure. We've been very clear about that. We ran on it and it was part of our budget.

We are now implementing that plan and we have been very, very clear that we understand the need for investment in infrastructure across this province—quite frankly, the need for investment in infrastructure across the country, but Ontario has put forward a plan that will allow us to do our part.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the leader of the third party wants to encourage people to make assumptions about hydro rates, about electricity rates, that simply are not the case. The fact is that the Ontario Energy Board, which sets rates now, will set rates after the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One. She knows that, Mr. Speaker, and she knows we need those investments in infrastructure.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Whether it's the more than half a billion dollars in debt retirement charges that didn't retire debt but instead just disappeared, or Hydro One dollars that the Liberals are counting once for infrastructure and a second time against the debt, I can't blame Ontarians for losing trust that this government has their best interests at heart.

Will the Premier and her government take a step towards rebuilding the trust of Ontarians and commit to not sell any more of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I think the fact that the Trillium Trust exists, that the funds from the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One will go into the Trillium Trust and that that money will be invested in

infrastructure is exactly the kind of transparency that we promised to the people of Ontario, and that we are delivering.

But there are people in every community in this province, not just the municipal leaders, not just the elected officials, but the people living in communities, who know that they need investment in the infrastructure in their communities. They know that the roads, the bridges and the transit in their communities are inadequate. They know that in their municipalities they do not necessarily have the resources to make those investments.

So they look to the provincial government and they look to the federal government to work with their municipal leaders to make those investments. That's what we're doing. That kind of infrastructure investment has the benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, when we talk about transit, and providing economic development in communities.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. The Liberals insist that selling off Hydro One will painlessly pay for transit, but the independent FAO says it won't raise the money that the Liberals insist it will. The FAO says that it will leave this province in worse shape than it is today, losing money that could be invested in health care, education and all kinds of other important programs. Can this Premier explain why this government thinks that the FAO is wrong?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Finance is going to want to comment on that report. But the leader of the third party knows full well that the FAO said we were on track to reduce our deficit, to eliminate our deficit, and in fact, didn't take into account the revenues from the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One.

We are on track to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. We are investing in infrastructure; there's building going on around the province. There will be more building because the needs are great. We are still catching up, and we know that if we don't make those investments, we will not be competitive and our communities will not be competitive in an economy that is global. So we're going to make those investments in order to make sure that Ontario is as competitive as it can be on the global stage.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier knows or ought to know that the FAO in fact said the opposite and this province will be in worse financial shape in the long run. That's what the FAO said. He said that selling off a revenue-generating asset in order to pay for transit is the worst way to fund infrastructure in the province of Ontario. But yesterday, the Minister of Finance insisted that selling Hydro One would "make more value for the province of Ontario." The FAO says, "the province's budget balance would be worse than it would have been without the sale." Can the Premier explain why people

should believe the Liberals instead of the independent Financial Accountability Officer for this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The FAO says the following: He acknowledged that our plan to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18 is achievable. He goes on to say that in both 2013 and 2014, program spending was \$1.2 billion lower each year than the original budget projection. He further states, "As a result, it is reasonable to expect the government will continue ... to manage program spending for 2015-16 below the original budget plan projection."

He recognizes that the work that's being done, as well as optimizing our assets for reinvestment into our economy, will produce other revenues, and he recognizes that what we are doing now is achievable. He also states, by the way, that asset repurposing is not what's being depended upon in terms of balancing the budget. He says that as well.

The member of the third party is wrong in her assessment. We are doing what's necessary to reinvest in our economy and produce new assets.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, this is not simply a game of cut-and-thrust in question period. It is about the people of Ontario, people who are worried about whether or not they're going to be able to have their jobs going forward, worried about whether they're going to be able to pay their bills this year, and what they're going to do each and every year that private shareholders push those bills up and up. They're worried about whether they can trust anything they actually hear from this government across the way.

Will the Premier show good faith to the people of this province, the people of Ontario, the 185 municipalities that have told them to stop the sell-off, the 80% of Ontarians who have said, "Stop the sell-off"? The chamber of commerce is worried about the impact of the sell-off on business in this province. Will she do the right thing and stop any further sell-off of shares of Hydro One?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, let me be very clear: Ontario's unemployment rate is down to 6.8%, below the national average. It was this party that provided indexing to the minimum wage, which that member opposite voted against. We have produced real jobs—560,000 real jobs, net new jobs, since the recession.

Furthermore, we are investing. We have investments concurrently under way. The member opposite—I'm not sure what she would cancel. Is it the Hamilton LRT where she lives? Is it the GO expansion in Kitchener where her opposition—

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to see that one day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener-Waterloo, second time.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Is it the expansion of the Sudbury region? Is it the high-speed rail from London to Windsor that's being proposed right now? Is it the realignment of Highway 7 in Kitchener and Guelph?

We need to understand what it is the member opposite would cancel if we don't do what we're doing to repurpose our assets and reinvest in the very projects that are necessary for our economy.

BY-ELECTION IN SUDBURY

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is to the Premier. Gerry Loughheed Jr. is supposed to have another court date today in his role in the Sudbury by-election bribery scandal. I'm not going to ask about that because I don't need the government House leader to tell me that he can't answer because it's before the courts. But there is so much more at play.

According to the Globe and Mail's Adrian Morrow, prosecutors agonized for months over whether to advise police to go ahead with charges against Pat Sorbara. It's not as clear as the government likes to make it out to be. Whether what Ms. Sorbara did was illegal we may never know, but we certainly know it was unethical and immoral.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader, second time.

Mr. Steve Clark: Mr. Speaker, I was just wondering how hard it was for the Premier to disregard her integrity by supporting Sorbara in the alleged bribery?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite understands that I have answered many, many questions on this subject in the House and outside of the House. He also knows that there is a case before the courts, and I have no further comment to make.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Steve Clark: Again to the Premier: Gerry Loughheed Jr. is still on trial. I know it's before the courts. Pat Sorbara is still under investigation for violations of the Election Act. I know it's an ongoing investigation. We've talked about those things endlessly, but something we don't talk often enough about is what happened on February 20. That's the day the Premier marched into this building and threatened the opposition. She tried to silence us by accusing both parties of quid pro quo arrangements and trading seats for jobs, but we didn't waver, because someone in this building—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Order. The members will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You won't know when I'm going to hit.

Please finish.

Mr. Steve Clark: Again, Speaker, that didn't waver us, because someone in this building has to have some integrity.

That being said, what is the Premier more embarrassed about: trying to intimidate the opposition to drop the issue, her deputy chief of staff still being under investigation, or the fact that a senior Liberal operative is in court today on corruption charges?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I've noticed a trend. When the opposition decides to talk about things that should not be discussed in this Legislature, it's always when they have nothing to talk about. Instead of talking about climate change and how we're going to fight climate change, instead of talking about building public infrastructure, especially public transit across the province, they choose to speak about issues—

Interjections.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finish, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Clearly, when they have nothing substantive to talk about, issues that are important to the people of the province, they choose to talk about issues that are before the courts, which they know—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nipissing and the member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order. The member from Nepean–Carleton, second time.

Finish, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: They continue to talk about issues that really do not advance the progress—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin–Caledon.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: —in our province by ensuring that we tackle the issues around climate change, by ensuring that we're building Ontario up by investing in our communities, because they have no concrete, no positive ideas whatsoever.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, second time.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: So therefore—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, you're warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: It's unfortunate that the official opposition continues to focus on issues that are within the purview of the courts and that should not be discussed in this Legislature, instead of focusing on things that matter to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. First we learned that Ontario families were subsidizing the Hydro One IPO to the tune of three million bucks. The fall economic statement showed that the public subsidy for the sell-off has ballooned to \$63 million. How much more will Ontario families have to pay be-

cause of this government's short-sighted decision? How much more?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know, I didn't expect that the official opposition—the PCs—would ask a question about climate change, because even though the Leader of the Opposition says that he got into politics because he has a social conscience, I didn't expect that. But I did expect that somewhere in the leadoff question, or in the first three questions, the NDP might ask a question about climate change.

There's a very important conference going on in Paris right now. Leaders from around the world are there to try to forge an agreement that is going to allow the jurisdictions on this planet to work together to make sure that we don't increase the temperatures on this planet above two degrees. But there is no question coming from the NDP—shockingly, Mr. Speaker, given that they purport to have a conscience about things environmental.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, second time. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

One sentence.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In fact, the assumption underlying the questions that the NDP are asking—that we shouldn't be investing in infrastructure—actually works against the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please.

Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I have to say that the use of the issue of climate change as a shield for this disgusting action on the government's part is reprehensible.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, second time.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The Premier's powerful friends are getting all the benefits from the Hydro One sell-off, but we are paying the bills. There's a question of fairness about who gets the benefits and who pays the costs, because on top of the \$63 million that we're paying to subsidize the IPO, Ontario is going to lose \$500 million a year from that sell-off—\$500 million a year. Last year alone, Ontario received about \$750 million from Hydro One. Now we're giving it up.

On top of losing steady revenues, how much more will Ontarians be paying to subsidize the sell-off if the government sells the rest?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member of the third party knows that the costs are being recovered through the IPO. He knows that the way that rates are set now is the way that rates will be set at the conclusion of this.

But I would suggest to the people of Ontario that in fact this member, who is a self-proclaimed environmentalist, is actually using the discussion about Hydro One as

a shield—as a shield—against the fact that the NDP has no interest in talking about climate change, has no interest in talking about the future of this planet and has no plan to deal with those realities.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You're risking a warning.

New question.

TAXATION

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Our government has a strong record of supporting Ontario's 444 municipalities. We believe it's important to have a strong working relationship with our municipal partners. That's why, when we came into power, we reversed the costly—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Where's the climate change question? Where's your climate change question? Come on, Speaker, I was waiting for a climate change question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins-James Bay, come to order.

Finish, please.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: That's why, when we came into power, we reversed the costly downloads to municipalities by the former PC government. As a result of the combination of provincial uploads and other supports, Ontario municipalities are receiving a combined benefit of more than \$3.7 billion in 2015 alone.

Recently, there's been speculation about whether our government will be giving municipalities the option to put forward a municipal land transfer tax which is currently only active in Toronto. Speaker, there has been lots of confusion and misinformation on this matter. It's one that Ontarians feel strongly about.

Through you, would the minister please provide some clarity on the province's position on expanding land transfer tax powers to other municipalities?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, I sure will, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank you and thank the honourable member from Cambridge, a great MPP.

The province has a strong record, as the member noted, of supporting and working with municipalities to ensure that they're able to provide the services that their communities need.

We consulted with a wide range of stakeholders during our Municipal Act review period that ended October 31. We are currently reviewing that feedback and can tell you there has been no call at all for a municipal land transfer tax, nor is there any legislation before the House that would allow this, nor has it been our intent, based on our extensive consultation, to introduce legislation to put in place a municipal land transfer tax. Let me be clear: There will be no extension of the ability to have a land transfer tax to any municipality—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

While I have your attention, I find that this place could use a little reminder that the debates tend to escalate when we do not do the rules or follow the protocols that we have got in place that are very useful. The one I will remind you of—and I will probably start ramping up my expectations of all the members—is that you do not call members by anything else other than their title or their riding. I don't need editorials. We can elevate this together, or if you want me to do it, it will not be joyous.

Supplementary?

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Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you to the minister for this answer and his thoughtful consideration of this issue. I know my constituents in Cambridge and North Dumfries and constituents across Ontario will be pleased to hear that we will not be expanding the land transfer tax powers to other municipalities, to reflect what we heard during the review of the Municipal Act.

With that being said, I know that local governments have the closest relationship to the people in their communities. They provide front-line services like public transportation, garbage collection and recycling, and recreational facilities. All Ontarians want strong, vibrant communities where they can live, work and raise families.

I know that during the review of the Municipal Act, you travelled across Ontario and met with municipalities to discuss a variety of issues. Speaker, through you, will the minister please share with this House what issues were discussed as part of the review of the Municipal Act?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, now that I've been absolutely clear about the land transfer tax, I'm delighted to answer the second part of the question.

When we consulted with municipalities, we asked specifically whether there was sufficient accountability and transparency in their actions, whether municipalities have the powers and tools to deliver services effectively, like transit and waste diversion, and what barriers municipalities face to achieving financial stability. These are all important issues that our government takes very seriously, as do our municipal partners.

Our government is already taking action to help municipalities to receive more money to pay for transit services and waste diversion with the proposed Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, known as Bill 73. If passed, this important piece of legislation will help communities grow and pay for the important public services that they deliver to their people every single day.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Jack MacLaren: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry. We are all shocked by the bad news from Hornepayne, where the Haavaldsrud sawmill has announced they will be shutting down and laying off all 200 employees because they have not been able to secure a contract from the Ontario government for

their cogeneration plants. These layoffs will have a devastating effect on the town of Hornepayne because they represent 50% of the total employment in the community and they come just before Christmas.

Forestry is the second-largest industry in Ontario. The industry suffered a massive downturn in 2008, resulting in a loss of 50% of the forestry jobs in Ontario. Recently, there has been an increase in demand for wood products, which represents hope for a turnaround in the industry. This bad news could be the straw that breaks the camel's back in Hornepayne. Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question. I know that the Minister of Energy will want to weigh in on this, and I will refer the supplementary to him.

The member is right that forestry suffered a significant downturn in 2005-06. In fact, the downturn suffered by this particular industry was a precursor to the greater recession that came in 2008.

I would remind this member and all members in the House that it was because of that downturn in 2005-06 that this government put in place an incredibly broad base of support programs for this particular industry. In fact, the broad base of supports and programs that we put in place totalled somewhere in the order of magnitude of \$1.3 billion.

Speaker, I can tell you that even with this particular partner in the industry, we've provided specific supports of a very significant nature to this particular industrial player. We continue to work with them on this, we're aware of the issue and, as I've said earlier, I know that the Minister of Energy will add some more information on this particular situation in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It is the energy policies of this government that have precipitated the problems in Hornepayne, as they have in other communities all across northern Ontario and all across Ontario. Until you make the changes—and I ask the Minister of Natural Resources to stand with your cabinet colleague and fight for jobs in the north by getting your cabinet to reverse the disastrous energy policies that have sent prices through the roof. That is why this company hoped to mitigate some of the damage by selling some electricity back to the province. Now you've shut them off on that.

Will you stand today and say, "I'm in favour of keeping jobs in the north," and talk to your energy minister to reverse these disastrous policies?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Minister of Natural Resources? Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I want to compliment the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, who has made representations in a professional way. We've had an ongoing dialogue and he has shown tremendous concern for this issue. We are working towards a solution, but the bottom

line is that the power purchase contract which the operator has in hand right now is not economically viable. They're asking for a higher purchase price, which will put pressure on prices. Notwithstanding that, we're asking all of the participants who are engaged and impacted by this to try to come up with a solution. We are mildly optimistic that we can come up with a solution.

In terms of advocacy from the opposition, rather than yelling and screaming, as we've just heard, I want to compliment the member from Manitoulin for the effort that he has made in working with us towards a solution.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are people who have been warned in this House.

New question.

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Wayne Gates: My question today is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, in the Attorney General's scathing report on your privatized winter maintenance contracts, we learned that your government spent millions of dollars to buy equipment for companies you had awarded contracts to, like DeAngelo Brothers in Sudbury. Now those contracts are failing.

My question for you is a simple one: What will happen to the equipment your government spent millions of dollars to purchase now that those contracts have been cancelled?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would remind the member that props are not allowed to be used in the House. If it happens again, it will be taken.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member from Niagara Falls for the question. I tried to explain this earlier to the official opposition. In the case of, for example, the Kenora contract, which both the government of Ontario and Transfield, the former contractor that had responsibility for the Kenora contract, as an example—when both parties mutually agreed a number of months ago to end the contract in question, we then went out to procurement and awarded that contract area for this winter season to another company that is in the Kenora area and that actually has more pieces of equipment out being deployed over the course of this winter season versus what took place last winter season.

The way that our area maintenance contracts work with regard to the pieces of equipment is that the government of Ontario is actually purchasing a service from the contractors, not individual pieces of equipment. We don't buy the equipment; the contractor purchases or leases the equipment and we pay for the service that that equipment will provide to the people, in this case, of Kenora, or in the case of Sudbury.

The contractor is required to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Wayne Gates: The concern was that last year you awarded the contracts to companies that didn't have the equipment to provide the safety that the residents of

Ontario should have had. People were injured and died on our roads in the province of Ontario.

Minister, you can talk all you want about following the recommendations of the Auditor General's report, but the fact of the matter is this: Your government awarded winter maintenance contracts to companies that didn't have the proper equipment and knowingly had the residents of Ontario drive on unsafe—unsafe—roads last winter, and Ontario continues to pay that price.

Minister, I will ask you again: Who will own the equipment that the people of Ontario spent millions of our hard-earned dollars to purchase now that these contracts have been cancelled?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, I thank the member from Niagara Falls for his question. There seems to be a little bit of confusion with respect to how the contracts work.

Whether we're talking about the existing, ongoing contracts or we're talking about additional equipment that's brought to bear—just to be clear on that, since 2012-13, 158 pieces of additional equipment have been deployed across the province of Ontario. Whether we're talking about the existing contracts or the additives, the additions on top of those contracts for equipment, the contractors purchase or lease the equipment. We pay them for the service that that equipment will deliver.

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In each of the cases, again, we followed all eight of the auditor's recommendations. We have, since 2012-13, deployed, with our contractors, 158 additional pieces of equipment.

WATER QUALITY

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: My question is to the Minister of Research and Innovation. Minister, millions of people around the world continue to suffer from an inadequate supply of clean and safe water. According to the World Health Organization, "Almost one billion people around the world lack access to an improved supply of clean water," and more than 50 countries continue to report cases of cholera and other diseases as the result of dangerous contaminants and pollutants in their drinking water. That is why it is imperative that our government continues to make investments in water technology that will ensure people have access to clean and safe water.

Minister, can you inform the members of the House on how our government is supporting Ontario companies to commercialize technologies that will have a meaningful impact for people all around the world?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Barrie for that very good question. Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes the importance of investing in clean water technologies that will benefit both the people of Ontario and people around the globe. That's why investing in water technologies is a core pillar of Ontario's innovation agenda, and a key area of its strategic focus and investments. With 22,000 people working in 900 companies across the province of Ontario, I'm proud to

say that Ontario has emerged as a global leader of water technologies.

Since 2003, our government has committed nearly \$50 million in funding to more than 100 water-related projects that will benefit people around the world. My ministry will continue to support the development and commercialization of new and innovative water technologies through research and commercialization funding.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Thank you to the minister for that answer. It is reassuring to know that our government recognizes the social and economic benefits of investing in water technologies. I understand that the global market for water technologies is estimated to be \$557 billion, doubling to \$1 trillion in 2020.

I often hear about the positive impact that Ontario's water tech companies are having around the world, thanks to the investments that have been made by our government. Minister, I know that Ontario has led a number of successful international missions that have helped create new partnerships with other jurisdictions who are leaders in the water sector. Minister, can you inform the members of the House on how our government is growing Ontario's water sector through these investments and international missions?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Again, I want to thank the member for that very good question. Through Ontario's Water Sector Strategy, our government is taking the necessary steps to ensure that Ontario remains a globally recognized leader for water technologies. That's why my ministry invested \$6.5 million in WaterTAP, an organization that is helping grow globally competitive companies and has emerged as Ontario's water champion.

Just recently, the Premier was in California to promote the innovative solutions that Ontario companies can offer to tackle the ongoing water issues in California. Our government has also signed an MOU with Jiangsu province in China on clean water technologies.

Mr. Speaker, my ministry will continue investing in innovative technologies that will give Ontario companies a competitive edge in the global water sector.

TRUCKING SAFETY

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Over the last few months, we've seen a rash of tragic fatal accidents involving trucks that continue to raise concerns over this minister's commitment to public safety on Ontario roads.

Today's Toronto Star report indicating that would-be truckers are headed out of the GTA traffic to "easy pass" testing facilities for their licences only heightens those concerns. Given the tragic toll that trucking accidents have had on our roads, it's the minister's responsibility to ensure truckers are tested to standards that meet Ontario highway traffic demands.

Can the minister tell us why so many GTA truck drivers, who will be driving in the GTA, are getting their licences in Bancroft and Clinton?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for his question. Of course, he knows, everyone here knows—I say this repeatedly—that ensuring roads and highways here in the province of Ontario remain safe for all road users is perhaps my top priority, certainly one of my most important priorities. Again, I said this earlier today, for the last 13 years, ranked first or second in North America is the province of Ontario.

Having said that, the work at the Ministry of Transportation in terms of making sure we deliver that outcome for the people of Ontario doesn't stop at any point in time. It's why a number of months ago I made a commitment on behalf of the government that we would introduce mandatory entry-level training for AZ drivers. That's a project we continue to work on with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and I anticipate that we'll begin to roll out that program in summer 2016. We will also take a look at the issue that's been raised in the Toronto Star today.

I look forward to working with that member and members on all sides of this House to make sure we continue to enhance our road and highway safety.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Back to the minister: Over a year ago, this minister promised us he would do something about unprepared truckers being licensed to drive on our roads. That was after it was revealed that provincial truck testing facilities weren't even taking potential truckers onto the 400 series of highways, as they were mandated to do. Today we learned that not only are truckers not learning on the 400 series, they're earning licences on traffic-light rural roads. It's been over a year and this minister fails to get the urgency of the need to have properly tested truckers on our major provincial highways. Will the minister tell us when he will finally begin to take these very real issues of public safety on Ontario roads seriously?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I thank the member for the follow-up question. He knows, as well as everyone else in this House, that everyone on this side of the Legislature takes these issues very seriously. I mentioned just a moment ago in my initial answer that we will roll out, working closely with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, mandatory entry-level training for potential AZ licensees, truck drivers, by summer of next year. We'll continue to work with everybody who provides in this particular realm.

Speaker, I should point out, in addition to the fact that over the last 13 years Ontario has ranked first or second across North America for highway safety generally speaking, on the issue of truck drivers specifically, since 1993, there has been a 79% increase in the number of large trucks used in Ontario. In that same period of time, there has been a reduction of 50% of the number of large truck fatalities that have taken place in the province of Ontario. It doesn't mean that our work ends, but it means that the track record we have is strong and we will continue to build on that going forward.

AUTISM TREATMENT

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. One month ago, we learned there are almost 16,000 kids waiting for essential ABA/IBI therapies in Ontario. The Premier and her government have had a month to take action to help families and kids who are languishing on the wait-list. In fact, when the Premier was running for the Liberal leadership, she said, "Every Ontarian with autism deserves our support, and has mine."

Families and kids with autism are reaching out to me and telling me that they feel hopeless and certainly don't have this government's support. Families are being forced to remortgage their homes; they are moving to other provinces just to get the support that their children need.

Will the Premier commit today to immediately ending the chronic wait-list for ABA/IBI therapies in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the member for this very important question. We know that the prevalence of autism is increasing in Ontario. It's gone from one in 100 children to one in 68 today, and that's why we've been increasing our investments in autism services to \$190 million annually.

We know that more has to be done. I, as Minister of Children and Youth Services, am equally concerned about wait-lists. However, it is important to note that while kids are on wait-lists, there are supports available. There's a range of services, whether it's speech and language, rehab services, respite services, mental health services. We continue to support families and we know there's more to be done; and I'll be pleased to speak further about it in the supplementary.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to go back to the Premier again. On my desk today, I have letters from the DiMambro family in my community of Hamilton and from the Onofrio family in Whitby that are directed at the Premier. These letters are heart-wrenching. In the words of one parent with a non-verbal child with autism, "By denying my son therapy, you are taking away from his voice—his only way to communicate with the world that is different from him."

The Premier must acknowledge her failure on this file. This government should not be balancing the books on the backs of families and children with ASD. Will the Premier commit to responding personally to each of these letters that I'm going to deliver to her from parents and kids with ASD?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I think it's important to acknowledge that probably many of us in this Legislature have received letters from families who have children who are experiencing autism. We all do our best to respond to that and support these kids as we go forward. I want to assure the member opposite and actually correct something she said earlier: I want to assure this House that the number of children receiving IBI and ABA has increased in the last two years; it has not decreased.

The total number of children receiving IBI has increased by 4.5%—I know we need to do more, Speaker—and the number of children receiving ABA has increased. These are the correct numbers, and it's very important that we frame these numbers properly, not using the point-in-time data that the third party has used.

We will continue to improve our services for children with autism. That's my priority. I'm looking forward to bringing more to this House on the autism strategy.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Too many critics have been talking down our manufacturing sector, yet the reality is that manufacturing has been growing steadily since the recession in Ontario, and with good reason, as manufacturing firms count on our skilled workforce, our climate of innovation and our streamlined business environment to encourage global trade.

Now Ontario is one of the global leaders in advanced manufacturing. Perhaps this, and the advanced manufacturing program at Sheridan College in my riding, which is a state-of-the-art advanced manufacturing program, is helping.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: What else is our government doing to support Ontario manufacturers in this precarious global situation?

Hon. Brad Duguid: What a timely question, considering that the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters are here in the Legislature today. Jayson Myers, president, and Ian Howcroft, VP Ontario, are in the building and will be meeting with members and will be having a reception later on. I think what they would tell us today in this Legislature is that manufacturing has continued to grow since the global recession and that we have to stop talking down manufacturing and start talking it up because it's growing in Ontario and making exciting strides.

This government is working in partnership with our manufacturing sector. Our accelerated capital cost allowance is incenting them to reinvest in their plants and reinvest in their equipment, saving them to the tune of \$290 million, which is providing them with the incentive they need to do that. We're also participating in partnerships when it comes to business support programs.

My time is running out. I'll respond to that more in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Minister, for that answer.

Mr. Speaker, the minister is absolutely right. Ontario is uniquely positioned to take advantage of the future of manufacturing due to our ICT strengths. But our strengths lie beyond what the minister has already mentioned. For example, Ontario is among the top jurisdictions for vehicle production in North America. In 2014, Ontario produced more vehicles than any other subnational jurisdiction in

North America, supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs across the province. Also, our manufacturers have benefited from a very successful recent trip to China by the minister, the Premier and other members of this Legislature.

Minister, can you tell us: What are the other ways by which we are ensuring that our manufacturers remain globally competitive?

Hon. Brad Duguid: There are so many areas that I could dive into to respond to that question, but let me start with the Premier's recent trip to China. That trip alone generated \$2.5 billion in trade deals, and we're expecting that about 1,700 jobs are going to emerge from that, many of those in manufacturing.

Prior to that, I was in Japan with Ray Tanguay, our special adviser on auto. We met with many auto and aerospace companies—over 25 of them—talking to them about the competitiveness in growth, ingenuity and innovation happening here in Ontario.

We are becoming a global leader in advanced manufacturing. We're becoming the place where manufacturers come to test their products, to develop their first-generation products. This province is growing. We have a proud manufacturing base. It's back in growth mode. It's something all Ontarians can take pride in, and we're proud of the government working in partnership with that very important sector.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. We learned yesterday in committee that the Ministry of Health had failed to consult with many stakeholders regarding Bill 122, the Mental Health Statute Law Amendment Act. The ministry failed to consult with the Ontario Medical Association, the Coalition of Ontario Psychiatrists, the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario, Legal Aid Ontario, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health during the creation of this bill. Each and every one of these groups represents individuals who will be affected by the change in this bill. In fact, the ministry didn't even open up discussions with these groups until after second reading.

Mr. Speaker, has the government been in power so long that they feel they no longer have to consult with Ontarians?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question from the member opposite. I think the member appreciates that, due to the narrow scope of the amendments being proposed in the legislation that is currently before committee—in fact, the amendments are the result of a court decision here in Ontario that asked for some changes to be made to the legislation. I would hope that the member opposite would agree that large, significant consultations that we normally undertake are not required.

However, with that being said, we did consult with many, many groups in the process of developing these proposed amendments, which are still before committee. I'd be happy to speak to some of those entities that we

did consult with appropriately despite the narrow focus and the court order that resulted in these changes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Actually, the ministry spoke to maybe four or five groups and spoke to nobody between April and September.

However, this flawed policy process that this government has created is due to the fact that they're not following any process whatsoever. For instance, this is not the first instance of not consulting with key stakeholders. Just last week, the ministry announced that medical marijuana users were allowed to smoke or vape anywhere in Ontario, yet 24 hours later, they pulled a 180 and pulled back the exemption because they listened to the media, they listened to the public, and even the Premier was against their regulation. This government made the exemption without any consultation whatsoever. It seems that the government isn't interested in hearing what Ontarians have to say anymore. Has the government forgotten who they represent?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Not at all, Mr. Speaker. Again, given the decision by the Ontario Court of Appeal and the narrow scope of that decision with reference to the act itself, my ministry, in partnership with the Ministry of the Attorney General, has reviewed the act and consulted with stakeholders. Among the groups that we have consulted with who would be directly affected—because we're just talking about involuntarily detained inpatients in psychiatric facilities. We've consulted with the Consent and Capacity Board, the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council, the psychiatrists and chief from CAMH, Waypoint, Royal Ottawa and Ontario Shores facilities, with the Ontario Hospital Association and a number of others. We have done the appropriate thing here. We've consulted widely, despite the narrow framework, the narrow context of the amendments in question.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from London West on a point of order.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to welcome three guests who have joined us this morning: Dr. Katreena Scott, Canada research chair in family violence prevention and intervention at the University of Toronto; Thom Rolfe, executive director at Hiatus House in Windsor; and Harme Mendoza, executive director of Woman Abuse Council of Toronto, also known as WomanACT. Welcome.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'd like to correct the record in answer to a question this morning. I referred to the member from Algoma-Manitoulin. I would like to correct the record to read "the member from Algoma-Manitoulin, the member from Sudbury and the Minister of Northern Development."

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins-James Bay on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do have a point of order with regards to question period today. As you know, during question period, we're not allowed to raise points of order. We have to wait until after, so I'm doing it now.

Earlier, the Minister of Municipal Affairs made what was essentially a government announcement in the middle of question period. We do know that there is a convention in this place that that in fact doesn't happen, that ministerial statements are used to make those types of announcements, because otherwise, what ends up happening is the opposition doesn't get an opportunity to be able to respond. I would ask you to rule on this because, in fact, that was a ministerial statement; it was not a question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As the Speaker, I'm not in a position to make a judgment on whether or not it is an announcement of policy or not, but it has happened in the past where there have been obvious announcements that were made in answer to a question, and it is a more appropriate place for them to be given during ministerial statements or in any other forum in the House that's more appropriate, other than a simple question. So I would leave it at that: to advise all members that when making any policy statement there's another place for it other than question period.

DEFERRED VOTES

BUDGET MEASURES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR

LES MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 144, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact or amend certain other statutes / Projet de loi 144, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter ou à modifier d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1142 to 1147.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 23, 2015, Mr. Sousa moved second reading of Bill 144. All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.

Fraser, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie

Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Oraziotti, David
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq

Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine

Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Thibault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

Bailey, Robert
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Barrett, Toby
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Brown, Patrick
Chiarelli, Bob
Clark, Steve
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy
Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne

Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Hoggarth, Ann
Horwath, Andrea
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kiwala, Sophie
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Mantha, Michael
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
Mauro, Bill
McDonnell, Jim
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Miller, Norm

Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Oraziatti, David
Pettapiece, Randy
Potts, Arthur
Qadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Sergio, Mario
Singh, Jagmeet
Sousa, Charles
Tabuns, Peter
Takhar, Harinder S.
Taylor, Monique
Thibault, Glenn
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Brown, Patrick
Clark, Steve
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Hardeman, Ernie

Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Horwath, Andrea
Jones, Sylvia
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonnell, Jim
Miller, Norm
Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick

Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Singh, Jagmeet
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 53; the nays are 40.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 26, 2015, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

POLICE RECORD CHECKS REFORM ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA RÉFORME DES VÉRIFICATIONS DE DOSSIERS DE POLICE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 113, An Act respecting police record checks /
Projet de loi 113, Loi concernant les vérifications de
dossiers de police.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1150 to 1151.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 30, 2015, Mr. Balkissoon moved third reading of Bill 113.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted

Gélinas, France
Gravelle, Michael
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael

Moridi, Reza
Munro, Julia
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Baker, Yvan

Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hillier, Randy
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric

Moridi, Reza
Munro, Julia
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Nicholls, Rick

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 93; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

STRENGTHENING CONSUMER PROTECTION AND ELECTRICITY SYSTEM OVERSIGHT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR RENFORCER LA PROTECTION DES CONSOMMATEURS ET LA SURVEILLANCE DU RÉSEAU D'ÉLECTRICITÉ

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 112, An Act to amend the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 /
Projet de loi 112, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2010 sur la protection des consommateurs d'énergie et la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1155 to 1156.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 26, 2015, Mr. Delaney moved third reading of Bill 112. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Balkissoon, Bas
 Ballard, Chris
 Barrett, Toby
 Berardinetti, Lorenzo
 Bradley, James J.
 Brown, Patrick
 Chiarelli, Bob
 Clark, Steve
 Colle, Mike
 Coteau, Michael
 Crack, Grant
 Damerla, Dipika
 Del Duca, Steven
 Delaney, Bob
 Dhillon, Vic
 Dong, Han
 Duguid, Brad
 Fedeli, Victor
 Flynn, Kevin Daniel
 Fraser, John
 Gravelle, Michael

Hunter, Mitzie
 Jaczek, Helena
 Jones, Sylvia
 Kiwala, Sophie
 Lalonde, Marie-France
 Leal, Jeff
 MacCharles, Tracy
 MacLaren, Jack
 MacLeod, Lisa
 Malhi, Harinder
 Mangat, Amrit
 Martins, Cristina
 Martow, Gila
 Mauro, Bill
 McDonell, Jim
 McGarry, Kathryn
 McMahon, Eleanor
 McMeekin, Ted
 Meilleur, Madeleine
 Milczyn, Peter Z.
 Miller, Norm

Orazietti, David
 Pettapiece, Randy
 Potts, Arthur
 Qaadri, Shafiq
 Rinaldi, Lou
 Sandals, Liz
 Scott, Laurie
 Sergio, Mario
 Sousa, Charles
 Takhar, Harinder S.
 Thibeault, Glenn
 Thompson, Lisa M.
 Vernile, Daiene
 Walker, Bill
 Wilson, Jim
 Wong, Soo
 Wynne, Kathleen O.
 Yakabuski, John
 Yurek, Jeff
 Zimmer, David

Bailey, Robert
 Baker, Yvan
 Balkissoon, Bas
 Ballard, Chris
 Barrett, Toby
 Berardinetti, Lorenzo
 Bisson, Gilles
 Bradley, James J.
 Brown, Patrick
 Chiarelli, Bob
 Clark, Steve
 Colle, Mike
 Coteau, Michael
 Crack, Grant
 Damerla, Dipika
 Del Duca, Steven
 Delaney, Bob
 Dhillon, Vic
 Dong, Han
 Duguid, Brad
 Fedeli, Victor
 Fife, Catherine
 Flynn, Kevin Daniel
 Forster, Cindy
 Fraser, John
 French, Jennifer K.
 Gates, Wayne

Hatfield, Percy
 Hillier, Randy
 Hoggarth, Ann
 Horwath, Andrea
 Hoskins, Eric
 Hunter, Mitzie
 Jaczek, Helena
 Jones, Sylvia
 Kiwala, Sophie
 Lalonde, Marie-France
 Leal, Jeff
 MacCharles, Tracy
 MacLaren, Jack
 MacLeod, Lisa
 Malhi, Harinder
 Mangat, Amrit
 Mantha, Michael
 Martins, Cristina
 Martow, Gila
 Mauro, Bill
 McDonell, Jim
 McGarry, Kathryn
 McMahon, Eleanor
 McMeekin, Ted
 Meilleur, Madeleine
 Milczyn, Peter Z.
 Miller, Norm

Natyshak, Taras
 Nicholls, Rick
 Orazietti, David
 Pettapiece, Randy
 Potts, Arthur
 Qaadri, Shafiq
 Rinaldi, Lou
 Sandals, Liz
 Sattler, Peggy
 Scott, Laurie
 Sergio, Mario
 Singh, Jagmeet
 Sousa, Charles
 Tabuns, Peter
 Takhar, Harinder S.
 Taylor, Monique
 Thibeault, Glenn
 Thompson, Lisa M.
 Vanthof, John
 Vernile, Daiene
 Walker, Bill
 Wilson, Jim
 Wong, Soo
 Wynne, Kathleen O.
 Yakabuski, John
 Yurek, Jeff
 Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
 Bisson, Gilles
 Fife, Catherine
 Forster, Cindy
 French, Jennifer K.
 Gates, Wayne

Gélinas, France
 Hatfield, Percy
 Horwath, Andrea
 Mantha, Michael
 Natyshak, Taras
 Sattler, Peggy

Singh, Jagmeet
 Tabuns, Peter
 Taylor, Monique
 Vanthof, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 77; the nays are 16.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING GOVERNMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE RENFORCEMENT ET L'AMÉLIORATION DE LA GESTION PUBLIQUE

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 85, An Act to strengthen and improve government by amending or repealing various Acts / Projet de loi 85, Loi visant à renforcer et à améliorer la gestion publique en modifiant ou en abrogeant diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1159 to 1200.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 30, 2015, Mr. Bradley moved third reading of Bill 85. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
 Anderson, Granville
 Armstrong, Teresa J.
 Arnott, Ted

Gélinas, France
 Gravelle, Michael
 Hardeman, Ernie
 Harris, Michael

Moridi, Reza
 Munro, Julia
 Naidoo-Harris, Indira
 Naqvi, Yasir

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 93; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

ENERGY STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT DES LOIS SUR L'ÉNERGIE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 135, An Act to amend several statutes and revoke several regulations in relation to energy conservation and long-term energy planning / Projet de loi 135, Loi modifiant plusieurs lois et abrogeant plusieurs règlements en ce qui concerne la conservation de l'énergie et la planification énergétique à long terme.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1202 to 1203.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 3, 2015, Mr. Chiarelli moved second reading of Bill 135. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
 Anderson, Granville
 Baker, Yvan
 Balkissoon, Bas
 Ballard, Chris
 Berardinetti, Lorenzo
 Bradley, James J.
 Chiarelli, Bob

Fraser, John
 Gravelle, Michael
 Hoggarth, Ann
 Hoskins, Eric
 Hunter, Mitzie
 Jaczek, Helena
 Kiwala, Sophie
 Lalonde, Marie-France

Milczyn, Peter Z.
 Moridi, Reza
 Naidoo-Harris, Indira
 Naqvi, Yasir
 Orazietti, David
 Potts, Arthur
 Qaadri, Shafiq
 Rinaldi, Lou

Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dong, Han
Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine

Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles
Takhar, Harinder S.
Thibeault, Glenn
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: A nice girl, yes—five pounds, nine ounces, and her name is Adèle. She's the most beautiful baby in the world. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Adèle? Does she sing? Sorry.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MUNICIPAL LAND TRANSFER TAX

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Congratulations to the minister.

Today I'd like to stand in the House and say thank you. Thank you to everyone from Huron–Bruce, and constituents across the province, who took time to raise their voice with regard to the municipal land transfer tax, to tell the Liberals they were wrong.

We have heard a lot about the municipal land transfer tax in the Legislature over the last few weeks. During question period today, it was announced that the government has decided to backtrack on yet another one of their directives.

You know what? They make ill-conceived decisions, and then they react to public outcries by retracting.

I have to congratulate my colleague from Leeds–Grenville. He has done an outstanding job championing the opportunity for people to raise their voice, to say no to this government.

While I am happy that the Liberals actually listened to us, in the sense that they do not intend to expand the municipal land transfer tax, I hope they will listen to some of the other concerns Ontarians have voiced regarding the cost of home ownership as well. Ontarians continue to pay some of the highest rates in North America for hydro as a result, yet again, of the Liberal government's failed green energy initiatives, especially the green energy plan. I have to say that I need to encourage more people to stand up and say no to this Liberal government.

Again, I applaud my colleague from Leeds–Grenville. Steve Clark is right.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would be pleased to stand in this Legislature today, to talk about what happened in our community this past Sunday.

When you think about a Sunday afternoon, it's often a time to spend with family or friends, perhaps doing laundry, getting ready for the week that's coming. Sunday is often a day for rest and relaxation.

However, this past Sunday, 150 members of my community chose to spend their afternoon at a town hall in Whitby, to voice their opposition to this Liberal government's short-sighted sell-off of Hydro One. The reason they were compelled to do this is because it was the only opportunity that they have had to make their voices heard.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Brown, Patrick
Clark, Steve
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Hardeman, Ernie

Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Horwath, Andrea
Jones, Sylvia
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonnell, Jim
Miller, Norm
Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick

Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Singh, Jagmeet
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakubski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 53; the nays are 40.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? The Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Speaker, I refer Bill 135 to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): So ordered.

Just before we dismiss, I want to give all members—when the process of voting is taking place, you are to remain in your place. You are not supposed to get out of your place at all, for any reason.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1207 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good afternoon. It's time for introduction of guests. Introduction of guests? Last call for introduction of guests.

Therefore it's time for—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to hold on for a second, because I think, if I'm not mistaken, I missed someone who wanted to introduce a guest.

Oh, yes, right: the Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, I have someone to introduce, because yesterday at noon, I became a grandma for the first time.

Applause.

Earlier this year, this government decided to end a century of public hydro in our province. They did this without giving Ontarians the opportunity to have their say. It seems that this government isn't interested, but we wanted to give them that chance, so on Sunday we heard from neighbours, activists, local businesses and community leaders from Whitby, Oshawa, Clarington, Port Perry, Ajax, Pickering and from across Durham region, all of whom stood up to share why they believe this sell-off must be stopped. They talked about rising hydro rates, debt repayment, lost revenues and the fear that this is just the first of many assets on the government's chopping block. They joined eight provincial watchdogs, 82% of Ontarians, and 185 municipalities that have all called on this government to stop this sale.

That's what we saw in Durham on Sunday: the desire to be heard. We ask that this government listen to what the public has to say.

LUSH FRESH HANDMADE COSMETICS

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: On October 31, I was delighted to attend Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics' open house in Etobicoke–Lakeshore, for some family-friendly fun and a tour of their factory. Manager Tim Main was on hand to welcome Lush's neighbours to the facility and showcase some of their products and manufacturing processes.

This global company has its main North American manufacturing facility in Etobicoke–Lakeshore. They export their products all over North America and beyond, and they have created many jobs, making innovative and sustainable products.

Environmental and social stewardship are critical elements in the business decisions that are made by this company on a daily basis. They remain committed to becoming more sustainable even as the company grows. They use as little packaging as possible in their shops and offer many products that can be purchased without any packaging at all. They monitor their use of water in factories and are working to reduce consumption of freshwater resources.

The Etobicoke–Lakeshore plant uses fresh products, many sourced in Ontario, such as fruit, honey, mint. They source products from other local companies, like Fair Grounds coffee, for example.

This is another example of an Ontario-based manufacturer creating world-leading products, succeeding in international markets, and creating good jobs in Ontario. They're also a great community partner, supporting a number of local initiatives.

CANADA'S BEST RESTROOM

Mr. Steve Clark: There are so many reasons Ontarians should visit my riding of Leeds–Grenville and the world-famous Thousand Islands. Well, you can add one more to the list. Recently, the 1000 Islands Duty Free shop near Ivy Lea was voted as having Canada's best restroom, in a competition organized by Cintas Canada.

That's right—when it comes to answering nature's call, from coast to coast, they're number one. Obviously, Speaker, we're all flush with pride back home. It's a real honour for owners Heather Howard and her son Jeff Butler, whose incredible commitment to customer service never misses the mark.

They redesigned their facilities last year, and customers have been raving ever since. The men's room treats visitors to a rustic setting reminiscent of an upscale hunting or fishing camp. For the ladies, it's all about luxury and glamour, with brilliant red sinks and plenty of polished granite.

Of course, without a focus on keeping things clean, all the efforts of redesigning the facilities would have gone down the drain. But Heather and Jeff's staff is always Johnny-on-the-spot, and their hard work keeping the facilities tidy has earned praise on both sides of the border. That's no easy feat considering that 1,500 people can flow through those washrooms on a busy summer day.

So if you're travelling to eastern Ontario over the holidays and need some relief, be sure to visit Ivy Lea and the 1000 Islands Duty Free. Whether you need to powder your nose or just pick up some great deals, you won't go away disappointed.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Michael Mantha: I always like to rise in my place and talk positively about my riding. However, there's a community in my riding that has a huge black cloud over it, and that's the community of Hornepayne. They're going through so much turmoil and emotion right now, where 146 people are really concerned with the future and with the upcoming Christmas season. They are terrified of the impacts of a potential job loss, and that their local mill, Haavaldsrud, along with the Becker cogen plant, might be closed down for a very long and extended period of time.

A lot of discussions have happened with me, the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and the mayor, along with the proponents of the plant. These need to continue, but we really need some action.

My phone has been inundated with calls from concerned people out of Hornepayne—and I read this one on behalf of a community member, Mrs. Stephanie Berube-Luke: "The ball is in the hands of the provincial government, Hydro One, and the OPA. I am relying on you and your counterparts to help us. We have already lost so much, we cannot lose any more and remain" in Hornepayne. "We are relying on you as our MPP to help gather these parties, open the lines of communication, and assist with holding OPA and Hydro One accountable for what they've promised, and what we need!!!! Hornepayne will be a ghost town and many families will be left in the cold. Can you sleep with that on your conscience?? I couldn't, especially when there's a solution right in front of" us.

I want to help this community. I will scratch, I will fight, I will bite to make sure that we get a deal for Haavalsrud.

GIVING TUESDAY

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's very fitting that I rise in the House to tell you about a campaign that is spreading kindness and goodwill in my riding of Burlington. Today is Giving Tuesday, and a group of 10 charitable organizations are helping to raise awareness about the power of giving and the impact it has in our community.

Collective Hearts Burlington is made up of the Burlington Performing Arts Centre, the Burlington Community Foundation, the Royal Botanical Gardens, Carpenter Hospice, the YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford, Joseph Brant Hospital Foundation, the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton, the Halton Women's Place, Community Living Burlington and the Art Gallery of Burlington.

1510

From supporting our most vulnerable, caring for the sick, showcasing local arts and culture, and educating residents about our natural environment, the organizations that make up Collective Hearts each contribute in their own way to making Burlington the special community it is.

In addition to these remarkable organizations, Burlington is also made up of some pretty amazing people, and I have witnessed their generosity first-hand. After the August 2014 flood, neighbours and strangers alike opened their hearts to those whose homes were destroyed, offering a hand with cleanup, delivering homemade food and even offering door-to-door laundry service.

Most recently, Burlingtonians have come together to support the settlement of Syrian refugees. Mobilizing resources and services, our community is working to ensure these newcomers have all they need to start their new lives in Canada.

With the holidays just around the corner, it's important to remember those who are less fortunate in our communities and across our province. Starting today, Collective Hearts and Burlington residents will participate in Giving Tuesday, a social media campaign, and I ask all members of this House to do the same.

SANDRA HOLDSWORTH

Mr. Norm Miller: I rise in the House today to recognize a very deserving constituent from my riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. Recently, Sandra Holdsworth of Gravenhurst was recognized with the Trillium Gift of Life Champion Award.

Among the many criteria for consideration on being recognized with this award—includes someone who exhibits leadership qualities that result in notable contributions to the cause of organ and tissue donation and transplantation; takes action to help raise awareness of organ tissue donation and transplantation; provides

community leadership in building a culture of donation; and is a visible champion in the community. I can't think of a better way to describe Sandra.

Since being the recipient of a liver transplant in 1997, she has been a volunteer and tremendous advocate for the Be A Donor initiative.

Along with her work in her community, Sandra has competed at the Canadian, American and World Transplant Games.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sandra, on this tremendous award.

I know that we are a few months away from the annual donor month, April, but as we spend time with our families during the season of giving, I would ask people to take the time to go online to beadonor.ca to verify their organ donor card and sign up to give the gift of life.

CANADIAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: With three top-notch post-secondary institutions in my riding, we are fortunate to have a large student population, and their ingenuity, passion and dedication never cease to amaze me.

Today, it is my pleasure to congratulate St. Lawrence College school of business marketing students from Kingston's campus on winning the top awards at the 2015 Canadian Marketing Association Awards on November 27. Silver winners, all in third-year marketing, Caleb Huard, Shaunis Sakell, Nicolas Coulter and Kara Reynolds; and bronze winners, all graduates, Nathan Jenkins, Paula Gosselin, Anneliese Behrmann and Maria Bautista, competed against both colleges and universities nationwide in the largest and most prestigious marketing event in Canada.

In our increasingly global competitive marketplace, with numerous communication outlets to get the message to a target audience, effective marketing practices hold incredible value for our business community. Marketing strategies can drive sales, build brand recognition and consumer loyalty, and this business success translates into jobs and economic growth for our communities and our province.

Congratulations once again to both St. Lawrence College teams on this well-deserved achievement.

WORLD AIDS DAY

Mr. Glenn Thibeault: I'm very honoured to rise today and be able to speak on this day, World AIDS Day. We've come a long way since AIDS was first diagnosed back in the 1980s. If you look at last year's statistic, we had over 2,000 HIV cases reported in Canada, which represents a decrease of about 1.5% from 2013. That's the lowest number of cases reported to the Public Health Agency of Canada since 1985. So we're doing great things.

But still, there are 71,000 people who are living with HIV in this country. Aboriginal people make up about

12% of those individuals, and it's estimated that 25% of people living with HIV don't know it.

I'd like to acknowledge the Access AIDS centre in Sudbury, which has been doing great work on awareness for individuals not only in my community but around the province.

I know many of us here are wearing our red ribbons today, and I think that's so important. For me, it means a little bit more. On September 6, 1991, I lost my oldest brother to complications of AIDS. He was a very strong man, someone I'm very proud to have loved and called my brother and who instilled a lot of values in me about making sure that we continue to advocate to make sure that someday we can find a cure for this disease.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated December 1, 2015, from the Standing Committee on Government Agencies. Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

VISITORS

Hon. David Zimmer: I would like to introduce two very talented public servants who are in the lobby today. They have worked very hard on the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015, which I expect will be introduced shortly. They are Candice Telfer, who is counsel at the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, and Adela Wan, who is a policy adviser at the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Welcome to our guests.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CUTTING RED TAPE FOR MOTOR VEHICLE DEALERS ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 ALLÉGEANT LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES POUR LES COMMERÇANTS DE VÉHICULES AUTOMOBILES

Mr. Clark moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 152, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act /
Projet de loi 152, Loi modifiant le Code de la route.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Steve Clark: The Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2015, amends the Highway Traffic Act to enable certain motor vehicle dealers to apply for permits, number plates and other things by electronic means or in an electronic format.

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO SECRETARIAT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE SECRÉTARIAT DE LA NATION MÉTISSE DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Orazietti moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 153, An Act to recognize the corporate structure of the Métis Nation of Ontario by enacting the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015 / Projet de loi 153, Loi visant à reconnaître la structure juridique de la nation métisse de l'Ontario par l'édiction de la Loi de 2015 sur le Secrétariat de la nation métisse de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Hon. David Orazietti: I'm pleased to rise in the House today to introduce this new legislation, the Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat Act, 2015.

This legislation fulfills a commitment made by the Premier in 2014 to develop Métis Nation of Ontario-specific corporate legislation. We have worked in partnership with the Métis Nation of Ontario during the development of the legislation. If passed, the legislation would recognize the unique democratic nature of Métis Nation of Ontario Secretariat structure and allow it to operate more effectively under the Corporations Act and the Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010, when it comes into force.

I want to commend the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs for his leadership on this, and I want to thank staff in my office.

1520

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (CONTRAVENTIONS CAUSING DEATH OR SERIOUS BODILY HARM), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (CONTRAVENTIONS AYANT CAUSÉ UN DÉCÈS OU DES BLESSURES CORPORELLES GRAVES)

Mr. Gates moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 154, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to create an offence of contravention causing death or serious bodily harm / Projet de loi 154, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour ériger en infraction le fait d'avoir

causé un décès ou des blessures corporelles graves pendant la commission d'une contravention.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for a short statement.

Mr. Wayne Gates: The bill amends the Highway Traffic Act. If a person causes or contributes to causing an accident which causes death or serious bodily harm at a time the person was contravening the Highway Traffic Act or its regulations, then the person is guilty of an offence. The court may sentence a person to a fine of up to \$5,000 or to imprisonment for up to 12 months, or both. The court may also suspend the person's licence or permit.

PETITIONS

TAXATION

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'd like to share this petition just to remind the government how important this is.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing plans to give all Ontario municipalities the ability to charge their own municipal land transfer tax (MLTT) in addition to the provincial land transfer tax homebuyers already pay;

"Whereas an MLTT would increase the amount of land transfer taxes due at closing on the average-priced home in Ontario to more than \$10,000;

"Whereas this regressive tax would kill the dream of home ownership for many young families already struggling to make ends meet after being hit by new taxes and rising hydro costs by the Wynne government;

"Whereas an MLTT would make Ontario the most uncompetitive tax jurisdiction in North America when it comes to buying a new home, costing our province's economy \$2.3 billion and some 15,000 full-time jobs; and

"Whereas a recent Ipsos Reid poll showed 89% of Ontarians outside of Toronto oppose this tax grab;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows: that members of the Legislature vote to support MPP Steve Clark"—because Steve Clark is always right. His private member's bill would have said that "the government should not impose or help municipalities facilitate the imposition of any new municipal land transfer taxes."

I totally agree with these folks, and clearly, the government did as well.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Michael Mantha: I am proud to stand in my place and read this on behalf of a campaign and volunteers in Elliot Lake who spent three days collecting these. It's a petition.

"Hydro One Not for Sale! Say No to Privatization.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government is creating a privatization scheme that will lead to higher hydro rates, lower reliability, and hundreds of millions less for our schools, roads, and hospitals; and

"Whereas the privatization scheme will be particularly harmful to northern and First Nations communities; and

"Whereas the provincial government is creating this privatization scheme under a veil of secrecy that means Ontarians don't have a say on a change that will affect their lives dramatically; and

"Whereas it is not too late to cancel the scheme;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario immediately cancel its scheme to privatize Ontario's Hydro One."

I sign with the 700 petition signatures, and present it to page Dayo to bring down to the Clerks' table.

TENANT PROTECTION

Mr. Jim Wilson: This comes from the residents of Country Meadows in Wasaga Beach.

"Whereas our present land leases with Parkbridge Lifestyle Communities Inc. are covered by the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 (RTA); however, they are exempted from the protection of rent controls under the act. Being part 1, section 6, subsection 2, and,

"Whereas the landlord has the option to increase the monthly land rental by \$50 above the existing rent, to a new purchaser, when a home is sold.

"Whereas 'Country Meadows' is a community of permanent homes located on leased lands whose residents are retired and living on fixed incomes. Continued rental increases beyond the guidelines of the RTA, is unsustainable to retired residents on fixed incomes.

"Therefore, we the undersigned residents of 'Country Meadows,' petition the Legislature to change the RTA to include rent controls for retirement-type communities located on leased lands and, to delete the option given to landlords to increase land rental rates upon sale of a home in such communities. The foregoing would enable retirees to remain in their homes and enjoy their hard-earned retirement years."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and thank the residents of Country Meadows.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the provincial government has cancelled the Northlander passenger train which served the residents of northeastern Ontario; and

"Whereas the provincial government has closed bus stations and is cancelling bus routes despite promising enhanced bus services to replace the train; and

"Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) has been given a mandate that its motor coach division must be self-sustaining; and

"Whereas Metrolinx, the crown corporation that provides train and bus service in the GTA ... is subsidized by more than \$100 million annually; and

"Whereas the subsidy to Metrolinx has increased annually for the last seven years;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To direct the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to reverse the decision to cancel bus routes immediately and to treat northerners equitably in decisions regarding public transportation."

I wholeheartedly agree and hand it down with page Ajay.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

M^{me} France Gélinais: I have this petition that was signed by Madame Ginette Durocher from Azilda, in my riding. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the residents of northern Ontario, particularly people who are sick or elderly, depend on public transportation for appointments in southern Ontario;

"Whereas intercity bus routes have been eliminated by Greyhound, for example, all daytime routes between Sudbury and Ottawa; and

"Whereas there have been serious reductions at Ontario Northland, including the elimination of Northland's train services;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to: Ensure that Ontario Northland offers adequate and equitable intercity transportation service from northern to southern Ontario."

I fully agree, will affix my name to it, and give it to Aaran to bring to the Clerk.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Michael Mantha: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Reverse the cuts to health care;

"(2) Return to the bargaining table with the OMA (Ontario Medical Association) to resume negotiations for a fair physician services agreement;

"(3) Work with all front-line health care provider groups to develop plans to create a sustainable health care system for the people of Ontario."

I agree with this petition and present it to page Prasanna to bring down to the Clerks' table.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Jim Wilson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Whereas the billion-dollar gas plants cancellation, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020; and

"Whereas the Liberal government wasted \$2 billion on the flawed smart meter program; and

"Whereas the recent announcement to implement the Ontario Electricity Support Program will see average household hydro bills increase an additional \$137 per year starting in 2016; and

"Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

"Whereas home heating and electricity are a necessity for families in Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity."

Mr. Speaker, I certainly agree with this petition and I will sign it.

1530

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Wayne Gates: I rise on a petition of over 100 signatures.

"Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% ... cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' ... quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve" and need.

NEWBORN HEALTH

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I have a petition to table.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Health Protection and Promotion Act ... calls for the mandatory administration of erythromycin ointment as a prophylactic agent into the eyes of all newborns and specifies that the Health Care Consent Act ... does not apply to the prevention or treatment of communicable diseases of the eyes of the newborn;

"Whereas research evidence shows that the administration of erythromycin is ineffective at preventing infection;

"Whereas the Canadian Paediatric Society and the Association of Ontario Midwives call for the rescinding of the mandatory ocular prophylaxis laws;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Health Protection and Promotion Act be amended to remove the forced administration of ophthalmic ointment."

I sign this petition and give it to page Ajay to bring to the assembly.

HYPERBARIC THERAPY

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas hyperbaric medicine has been proven to prevent unnecessary limb amputations, improving the quality of life of thousands of Ontarians;

"Whereas hyperbaric medicine has been proven effective to treat 14 medical conditions, including: chronic non-healing diabetic wounds, decompression sickness, air embolisms, carbon monoxide poisoning, gas gangrene, flesh-eating disease, compromised skin grafts, bone infections, radiation injuries and burns;

"Whereas diabetic non-healing wounds are the number one cause of limb amputation in Ontario;

"Whereas hyperbaric medicine has prevented hundreds of amputations, which in the short term cost \$65,000 per patient, and long-term cost" the system "\$350,000 per patient and have added up to hundreds of millions of dollars over the years;

"Whereas amputation of a limb greatly diminishes the quality and length of life of patients, something we cannot put a price on;

"Whereas there are only limited facilities in Ontario that provide hyperbaric oxygen therapy necessary to treat diabetic wounds that prevent unnecessary amputations;

"Whereas the government of Quebec funds hyperbaric medicine for the treatment of chronic non-healing wounds in that province;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as follows:

"(1) To recognize the existing and scientifically sound studies in the US, Europe, Japan, the UK, Australia and Asia which clearly show that hyperbaric oxygen therapy is effective especially in treating of diabetic wounds and ulcers;

"(2) To provide stable funding for the technical and professional costs of providing hyperbaric oxygen therapy, for doctors, medical staff and technicians, for existing and future facilities;

"(3) To increase the number of hyperbaric oxygen therapy centres across Ontario to prevent unnecessary suffering, economic loss and loss of quality and length of life."

I agree with this petition. I will affix my signature and send it to the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. I appreciate that from the member from Huron-Bruce for that short petition.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further petitions? The member from Essex.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you, Speaker. I'm pleased to present this petition that I know is near and dear to your heart. It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Highway 3 from Windsor to Leamington has long been identified as dangerous and unable to meet growing traffic volumes; and

"Whereas the widening of this highway passed its environmental assessment in 2006; and

"Whereas the portion of this project from Windsor to west of the town of Essex has been completed, but the remainder of the project remains stalled; and

"Whereas there has been a recent announcement of plans to rebuild the roadway, culverts, lighting and signals along the portion of Highway 3 that has not yet been widened;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To revisit plans to rebuild Highway 3 from Essex to Leamington and direct those funds to the timely completion of the already approved widening of this important roadway in ... Essex."

I could not agree more with this petition. Speaker, I will affix my signature and send it to the Clerks' desk with page Aislin.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Granville Anderson: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the residents of the municipality of Clarington have been promised that the GO train would be extended to Courtice and Bowmanville;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario keep its promise to Clarington residents and commit to providing the necessary funding for Metrolinx to complete the extension of the GO train to Courtice and Bowmanville no later than 2018."

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition and will affix my name to it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I appreciate that brevity is a sign of wisdom to the member from Durham.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Soliris for patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome (aHUS), an ultra-rare, chronic and life-threatening genetic condition that progressively damages vital organs, leading to heart attack, stroke and kidney failure; and

“Whereas Soliris, the first and only pharmaceutical treatment in Canada for the treatment of aHUS, has allowed patients to discontinue plasma and dialysis therapies, and has been shown to improve kidney function and enable successful kidney transplant; and

“Whereas the lack of public funding for Soliris is especially burdensome on the families of Ontario children and adults” living with this disease;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Instruct the Ontario government to immediately provide Soliris as a choice to patients with atypical hemolytic uremic syndrome and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding.”

I agree with this petition.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have three short petitions that were collected by Dr. Anh Thi Tran, who practises at T&T Medical Clinic in Concord, Ont. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“(1) Reverse the cuts to health care;

“(2) Return to the bargaining table with the OMA (Ontario Medical Association) to resume negotiations for a fair physician services agreement;

“(3) Work with all front-line health care provider groups to develop plans to create a sustainable health care system for the people of Ontario.”

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Hannah to bring it to the Clerk.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The time for petitions has now expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES LIMITES DES CIRCONSCRIPTIONS ÉLECTORALES

Mme Meilleur moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act / Projet de loi 115, Loi édictant

la Loi de 2015 sur la représentation électorale, abrogeant la Loi de 2005 sur la représentation électorale et modifiant la Loi électorale, la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to you, Attorney General.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I am pleased to be here today to discuss the Electoral Boundaries Act. I will be dividing my time to speak about this bill with the Attorney General's parliamentary assistant, the Honourable Lorenzo Berardinetti.

Il s'agit d'un projet de loi qui renforcera notre système électoral. Ce projet de loi veille à ce que les Ontariens et Ontariennes soient représentés de façon équitable et efficace à l'Assemblée législative.

We've proposed this legislation so that Ontario's provincial ridings better reflect population movement and growth and to ensure citizens are fairly represented in the Legislative Assembly.

Some areas of the province have experienced significant growth in recent years. Because of this growth, Ontario's current provincial boundaries no longer adequately reflect our population.

Si ce projet de loi est adopté, le nombre de circonscriptions dans le sud-est de l'Ontario passera de 96 à 111, et les circonscriptions refléteront celles qui existent actuellement au niveau fédéral. Ce sont, bien entendu, les circonscriptions qui ont été utilisées pour la première fois pendant l'élection fédérale du 19 octobre.

1540

The new ridings would mostly be in areas that have had significant population shifts and increases, places like Toronto, Peel, York, Durham and Ottawa, because it's no secret that the population in southern Ontario is booming. This is especially true for cities like Brampton, which has a population of more than half a million but currently has just three provincial electoral districts.

Si ce projet de loi est adopté, deux nouvelles circonscriptions provinciales seront formées pour Brampton, ce qui donnera aux résidents une voix plus puissante à l'Assemblée législative et établira une représentation qui reflète plus fidèlement la population en pleine croissance de la ville.

This is a bill that is about representation by population, a core democratic principle and one of the cornerstones of a fair, just and democratic society.

Mr. Speaker, you may also be interested to know that while the population in southern Ontario has continued to rise, the province has not redistributed its southern electoral districts since 2007. Clearly, these changes are due.

Même si nous allons ajouter 15 nouvelles circonscriptions dans le sud-est de l'Ontario pour refléter les changements apportés lors du récent redécoupage fédéral, il est important de souligner que nous proposons de maintenir les 11 circonscriptions provinciales existantes dans le nord de l'Ontario.

We will not reduce the number of northern seats, as has been done federally. As some of the members may

recall, in 2004 federal redistribution reduced the number of federal seats in northern Ontario from 11 to 10. We disagreed with that action because we believed that taking away from the voice in the north is a step in the wrong direction.

C'est la raison pour laquelle, l'année suivante, notre gouvernement a adopté la Loi de 2005 sur la représentation électorale, qui a préservé ce 11^e siège du Nord pour les élections ontariennes. Il n'y a aucun doute que, économiquement et socialement, le Nord est une partie indispensable et unique de la province.

This bill reaffirms our government's commitment to protecting representation for the northern Ontario and providing a strong voice for the north, now and in the future.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, la création de circonscriptions supplémentaires assurera une représentation qui reflète fidèlement notre population croissante et conférera aux Ontariens et Ontariennes une voix plus puissante.

Quite simply, passing the Electoral Boundaries Act will help our province build an inclusive and democratic society. I urge all members to stand in support of this bill to provide fair and effective representation for all Ontarians at Queen's Park.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? I recognize the member from Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Yes, Mr. Speaker. When the minister began speaking, she mentioned that she'd be sharing her time with the parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General, which is me. My riding is Scarborough Southwest.

Before I speak and make my few comments, I want to congratulate the Attorney General on becoming a grandmother for the first time yesterday. She mentioned it earlier, but not so many members were in the House at that time.

Mr. Chris Ballard: You're a good PA.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Thank you very much.

I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak in support of the Electoral Boundaries Act. As the Attorney General noted earlier, this is a bill that really speaks to the values of our government and how much our government values and upholds the principles of democracy.

As members are aware, earlier this year the Chief Electoral Officer made a number of recommendations to government on ways to improve and strengthen our election system. Adjusting our electoral boundaries, which we are proposing to do in this bill, was just one of the recommendations he made. In fact, he advised the government to undertake a number of steps, including to enhance voter engagement among youth and strengthen third-party election advertising rules.

As such, Mr. Speaker, in addition to changing Ontario's provincial boundaries in this bill, we're also looking at pursuing a number of additional measures in the future to strengthen our election system. I would like to take a moment to highlight these measures.

In his report, the Chief Electoral Officer recommended to allow provisional registration of 16- and 17-year-olds to make it easier for young people to vote when they become 18. We all know that citizens are more likely to vote if they get a notice of registration card telling them when, where and how to vote. In fact, an Ipsos Reid survey conducted following the 2014 general election indicated that young people may not be as informed about the election process as those who are older. Since youth are not included on the permanent register of electors for Ontario, they may not receive a notice of registration card for an election once they reach the age of 18. This provides an obstacle for many first-time voters.

To address this issue, in future legislation we plan to introduce rules that would allow 16- and 17-year-olds to be provisionally registered to vote. This will help more young people participate in the democratic process. If these measures are implemented, Elections Ontario would work with schools to help inform youth about the importance of voter registration. In my view, this is a step in the right direction as it will help empower our youth to be involved and informed citizens of our province and of our country.

In addition to pursuing measures to increase voter turnout, we also hope to tackle the issue of third-party advertising with future legislation. Third-party advertising rules were introduced in Ontario for the first time in 2007. Currently, third parties that spend \$500 or more on election advertising are required to register with the Chief Electoral Officer. They must also report to the Chief Electoral Officer on election advertising expenses. If election advertising expenses are \$5,000 or more, these reports must be audited.

As members may recall, in the last budget our government committed to strengthening the province's rules around election-related third-party advertising. We remain steadfast in keeping this commitment as we consider options moving forward.

Mr. Speaker, the Electoral Boundaries Act is a step in the right direction towards improving our election process, but it's just the beginning. As I've outlined today, our government has plans to build on the momentum of this bill and introduce future rules that would strengthen third-party advertising rules and enhance voter engagement among youth.

I hope the members will join me here today to help pass this bill and continue the process of strengthening the democratic processes of our province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's my pleasure to speak to Bill 115 today. I listened intently to both the Attorney General and her parliamentary assistant, and I would like to offer a few comments during this debate.

First off, I want to thank the Liberal Party for continuing the tradition that the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party started in 1999 with the first redistribution that ensured Ontario constituencies mirrored federal ridings. That was back in 1999. Premier Mike Harris, at the time,

reduced the number of seats in this House from 130 to 101, which was the number of federal ridings in Ontario at the time. It certainly was very helpful and it helped diminish confusion between federal and provincial constituencies. It was a marvellous undertaking, and I'm glad to see that the Liberal government today is continuing with that tradition.

1550

I would like to just say, from a personal point of view—and I think many members in this House would also see this—that I share my office with my federal counterpart. I've done so I was first elected in 2007. This gives a streamlined effect for constituents, whatever their concern may be. Whether it be provincial or federal, whether it be birth certificates or passports or anywhere in between, they can go into either one of our offices, because we share our offices and we share the same constituency.

That's the good part about this bill. It's going to mirror those federal ridings, except for that one difference in the north where, federally, we have 10 ridings and, provincially, we have 11. However, there's the good parts about this bill.

What disappoints me: I think the parliamentary assistant, especially, spoke about the government commitment to continue to further their steps towards democracy. But there's nothing in this bill that he was mentioning. Of course, we've all seen the Chief Electoral Officer's reports and his recommendations; they're very clear. However, not one of his recommendations made it into this bill—not one.

The parliamentary assistant spoke of third-party advertising, what the Chief Electoral Officer has recommended, but there is no change to third-party advertising. Also, very clearly, the Chief Electoral Officer has identified election financing as a need for reform as well, but there is zero—zero—interest or efforts by this government to include any reforms to election financing in this bill.

I just want to read a couple of parts of some of the recent editorials and columns in Ontario. This first one is from Martin Regg Cohn of the *Toronto Star* and it says, "Campaign Financing Rules a Growing Threat to Ontario's Democracy...."

"Our Premier could learn a thing or two from our Prime Minister about democracy." Of course, this is from a couple of months ago, and that was Stephen Harper that Martin Regg Cohn was referring to.

It goes on: "Thanks to Stephen Harper, this fall's federal election will be free from corporate or union donations, and any outside advertising will also be sharply limited."

"The national ban on big-money politics showcases the best of democracy for all Canadians—except Ontarians." That's from one of the columns.

Of course, the Chief Electoral Officer has also spoken to this. But the Ontario Liberal Party—Ontario's Liberal government—has chosen to turn their back on the widely regarded and respected Chief Electoral Officer and his recommendations.

Martin Regg Cohn goes on further. He had a number of columns this year on suspect or suspicious sorts of activities between the Liberal government and election financing and third-party advertisers.

Here he writes, in October of this year, "A nagging suspicion remains in some quarters that the Liberal government quietly made these payments to support the labour movement's anti-Conservative third-party election ads and political donations by teachers' unions. Both the Wynne administration and the unions have adamantly denied that there was any such intent." Of course.

That is referring to the exchange of millions of dollars, without invoices or receipts, between the Liberal government and the teachers' unions for, ostensibly, bargaining costs. And it goes on. A look at campaign finance disclosure for 2014 indicates—I think it was my microphone that was causing that feedback—that unions representing high school teachers and teachers in the Catholic system spent well over \$3 million on various election-related activities, including to fund a blatantly anti-Conservative coalition group called Working Families.

There's a quid pro quo that is happening between this government and big corporate money and big unions. Of course, we also see that with Bill 144, which was just introduced a week ago. Bill 144 has a clause in it. It's an omnibus bill—again, one of those bills that this government has often spoken adamantly against at the federal level but engages in that activity at every opportunity provincially. In Bill 144 there's a little clause that does away with a collective bargaining agreement between EllisDon and the IBEW and the building trades. Coincidentally, EllisDon contributed \$400,000 to the Liberal Party. I don't think that it's just a coincidence that this Liberal government has offered themselves and offered government for sale to union and corporate interests in Ontario.

Those are just a few of the things that the Chief Electoral Officer has talked about and others have talked about, but this Liberal government has turned a blind eye to those interests. We could go on about other elements that we've seen. Of course, the Sudbury bribery—there are no changes in the legislation that would limit the government's ability to offer up positions to certain individuals for political favours, as we saw what happened with the member from Sudbury and the member of the Police Services Board in Sudbury. These are things that, if the Attorney General had a true belief in restoring and improving justice and democracy, would have been included in Bill 115. It would have been a significant benefit to the people of Ontario. However, it would affect the Ontario Liberal Party's finances.

Once again, I'm glad to see that they're continuing that tradition started by the Ontario PC Party to mirror ridings—constituencies—between both federal and provincial levels of government.

There's one other thing that has come up. Actually, there are a number of things in the Chief Electoral Officer's report—recommendations that were not dealt

with. But I think one of the ones we can all see here is having a permanent voter ID. That could have been included. That would have saved a lot of trouble and problems, as we see in every election campaign, whether it be federal or provincial, of people being sent to the wrong polling stations, not being able to get their voting cards—a host of problems that happen in each campaign. We've seen it time and time again, but the Liberal government chooses not to address the faults and the failings that we know are inherent in our system.

I would like to see somebody from the Liberal side stand up and defend this change in Bill 144 for EllisDon and explain how the \$400,000 in party donations really didn't have any bearing on the government deciding to abrogate a collective bargaining agreement, and that the \$400,000 just—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Excuse me. I recognize the member on a point of order. Stop the clock, please.

1600

Mr. Granville Anderson: Sorry about that. I have to leave for committee. I just wanted to acknowledge some students from Uxbridge Secondary School who are here with us in the Legislature today. Welcome.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That's not a point of order. However, when we have guests, we do like to recognize our guests. So welcome.

Back to the member from—the call letters.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Lanark—Frontenac—Addington and—

Interjection: —Lennox and Addington.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Whatever. It's all yours.

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'm glad that the students from Uxbridge are here today, listening about what happens in your democracy. You're here today hearing and seeing what happens here in this chamber, and—

Mr. Chris Ballard: Your version, your version.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Well, the member from Newmarket would like to speak, but he doesn't have the floor. He likes to interject.

However, while you're here, after I leave, after I finish, hopefully the member from Newmarket will stand up and will explain to you why accepting \$400,000 and changing the law and breaking a union agreement is a good Liberal initiative to defend justice and democracy.

Maybe they can get up and defend taking advertising from Working Families and shuffling your money and your parents' money out to teachers' unions to fund those advertising campaigns. I'd be happy to hear what he has to say. If he does have a good response, feel free to email me what you think of his response later on.

Anyway, there are a couple of good things in this bill and a lot of things that clearly speak to the lethargic, lazy attitude of this government to actually fixing what's wrong in this province and making Ontario a much,

much better place for the students of Uxbridge, the students of all schools and all people in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is, I would say, with mixed emotion that I participate in the third reading of this bill. This bill basically focuses on electoral districts. You've all heard, if you've been here for a while, that we will be adding a number of electoral districts in the south, the west and the east of the province. But I represent a riding in northern Ontario. There are 11 provincial ridings in northern Ontario; Nickel Belt, the one that I represent. is one of them.

The problem with the bill is that they are rushing this through when, really, there is absolutely no reason to rush this, Speaker. We already know that the next election is not for another two and a half years, if not three years, and yet we have to rush through this, for reasons unknown.

When this bill was in committee, we tried to bring some amendments to the electoral districts in northern Ontario. I will go into more detail as to one particular change that needs to happen. I realize this is third reading, but it needs to happen. Had the Liberal government agreed to give this a little more time, they would have had the opportunity to travel this bill, to come to northern Ontario and to listen to the people of Nickel Belt, who would have told them clearly that the boundaries of the districts of Nickel Belt need to change.

For some of the people in the North, the boundaries make no sense whatsoever. I'm talking about the residents of Wahnapiatae First Nation. Wahnapiatae First Nation is a tiny First Nation. It is one square mile—that's all. That's on the side of beautiful Lake Wanapitei. It has been there for a very long time. It is quite a thriving First Nation. They have a lot of highly educated people who live there, who have started some small businesses, who do some consulting in environment, in energy, in mining. It's a First Nation that is very, very progressive and doing very well. Believe me, Speaker, I'm the aboriginal critic for my party, and there are not too many First Nations that I can stand up and say are doing well, but Wahnapiatae is one of them—a tiny First Nation on the side of Lake Wanapitei.

When you look at a map of Ontario, you see this vast land in the northeast corner of my riding where there is nothing. There is beautiful bush, there is old-growth forest, there is beautiful Lake Wanapitei—basically, nobody lives there. There is some mining happening. There is certainly a lot of forestry happening. There are some beautiful ATV and snowmobile trails. But if you go from the northeast part of Lake Wanapitei all the way to—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Stop the clock, please.

I'd just like to remind members, first of all, that I would appreciate that we keep the talk down—and there's a second reason why: not only to show respect for

the speaker, but also the fact that we do have guests in the House this afternoon and we do always want to be putting our best foot forward and giving a good example.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. I would encourage that.

I'd like to resume debate. Back to the member from Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'll recap a little bit. You have this vast land mass in the northeast of my riding where there's nothing but bush, and that goes all the way to Timiskaming. It looks like there's nothing. For most of it, there are no people who live there, so where the boundaries fell did not matter too much because there were no voters in that part. They decided to put all of that vast area of land in with the Timiskaming district. For most of it, it didn't matter too much because, as I say, all there is—certainly there are lodges out there, there are Ski-Doo and ATV trails, and there's logging and mining, but there are no permanent residents except for Wahnapiatae First Nation. Wahnapiatae First Nation lives on the side of that lake and has been there for—before anybody ever came, there have been First Nations people living there. Whoever the genius was in Toronto who looked at that and decided to put the boundaries there never came to Nickel Belt, never came on the ground to have a look to see how things were working. But there was a First Nation there.

I agree that for some time the First Nation was very small. About 30 years ago, there were only two people who lived there: Mr. and Mrs. Ricolette. But for years and years and years, there had been people living at the Wahnapiatae First Nation site. They've always maintained occupancy; they've always maintained the First Nation reserve there. But when somebody drew the line, they drew the line and put it as if Wahnapiatae First Nation was part of the vast area of bush where nobody lived. But there are people living there. There are now many, many families who live at Wahnapiatae First Nation. So why is it an issue? Because, like lots of other areas in my riding, there is only one road in and out. If you come to Nickel Belt, there's only one road to Westree; there's only one road to Shining Tree; there's only one road to Bisco; there's only road to Wahnapiatae First Nation. You drive in, and you drive out.

1610

That road happens to be in the city of Sudbury. That road brings you to Capreol, which is one of the municipalities in my riding, and then my constituency office is about 20 kilometres away from that one road. Because somebody way back in Toronto looked at all this bush and figured nobody lived there and drew the line on a piece of paper, they said that they were going to be in Timiskaming. Well, for those people to go to the riding of Timiskaming means coming out on this one road in and out of Wahnapiatae First Nation, driving through most of Nickel Belt, driving through the riding of Sudbury, and then driving through the riding of Timiskaming to finally make it to a constituency office in the Timisk-

aming riding. If there's no bad weather that day, there and back will probably take you about seven hours.

If you need to go to the main office, we're probably talking about a 10-hour drive there and back. They could be in my office in about a nine-minute drive, or they could go to the riding that somebody decided to put them in, with a day's drive. That makes no sense. Since the beginning, when the boundaries were first drawn, every chief of Wahnapiatae First Nation wrote to this government. Every chief and band council passed motions that asked this government.

We went to the person responsible for elections at Elections Ontario—I forgot the title of the person in charge, but they wrote to Elections Ontario. Elections Ontario wrote back and said that it is only when the boundaries are changed in the bill by the government that you will be able to do this.

My predecessor, Shelley Martel, took all of this. We tried to get it through a private member's bill. We tried to get the government to do these changes. Every time we get the same response: "Oh my God. That makes no sense. Why is it that way?" We don't know, because somebody who knew nothing about Nickel Belt and knew nothing about what it is to live in a rural area of northern Ontario drew a line on the map that made no sense. We've been stuck with this ever since.

When finally a bill comes forward that looks at electoral boundaries—yay! After decades of waiting, we have a bill that looks at electoral boundaries. Finally, it's going to be solved, Speaker. So the chief and the band council pass a resolution. The chief sends a letter. The band council sends a letter to the Attorney General. I go and meet with the Attorney General, explain it to her, draw some maps and show her the distance. She understood and thanked me for this information, and finally we have a bill. We are about to fix this.

Now the third reading is in front of me, Speaker, and they have changed a whole bunch of ridings in the south. But in the north? It doesn't matter that it made no sense. It doesn't matter that we have waited for at least 15 years for that bill to be brought into the House. There is no change. Wahnapiatae's voice will continue to be ignored. The people of Wahnapiatae will continue to be part of a riding that is hours' and hours' drive away. They'll drive through two different ridings to get to the one that they belong to.

I can't help but think, if that was happening anywhere down in southern Ontario, not only would the minister have driven to them, listened to them and brought the change herself, but it would be done.

But those people live in northern Ontario; they were here. Chief Ted Roque was here last week. He went and talked with the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. The minister was quite pleased to have a meeting with them. Chief Ted Roque is a gentleman in every sense of the word. He is well spoken. He is very cheerful in his approach. He's always happy to work with anybody who will work with them. He established a very good working relationship with the Liberals and with the Minister of

Aboriginal Affairs, who offered to work with them and extended a warm welcome: "We will listen to you. We will work with you. We are here to respect you."

While all of this was going on in the minister's office—all of those good promises of a healthy, positive working relationship between the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and its leadership representation, Chief Ted Roque of Wahnapiatae First Nation—the bill was in committee making its way through. Our amendment to make sure that Wahnapiatae First Nation gets put back into Nickel Belt and not into Timiskaming was being voted down by the same Liberal government. So, in the minister's office, they were making promises of being listened to, of wanting to have a healthy dialogue with them, of wanting to put a good, strong working relationship together, but what they had been asking for for the last 15 years was being turned down.

When we pressed—and my colleague who was there championing the bill will tell you—to say, "Well, why aren't you doing this amendment to the bill? Why aren't you listening to the people of Wahnapiatae First Nation who have been wanting to have this error corrected for 15 years?", there was dead silence on the other side. They gave the impression that they couldn't care less. This is really disappointing.

We have a Premier, we have a Minister of Aboriginal Affairs and we have an entire Liberal caucus who, last week, went out of their way, while the Chiefs of Ontario were at Queen's Park and in Toronto, to say that they had a good working relationship, that they were going to listen to them, that they were going to address their concerns, that they wanted there to be strong ties between the Liberal government and the First Nations chiefs, including the chief of Wahnapiatae First Nation, who was here. And when they ask for something that doesn't cost the government anything, is not going to change anything for anybody else except for this First Nation, who will then be part of the riding that is an eight-minute drive away from them, rather than 10 hours there and back, they get completely ignored. We get nothing.

How could that be? How can I make a change now, Speaker? I know this is third reading, but I hope the Liberals are listening. Just say that this one little First Nation—actually, it's a kilometre-squared First Nation on the side of Lake Wanapitei—will now be part of Nickel Belt. Thirty families or so will now vote in Nickel Belt rather than in Timiskaming. It's not too late to do the right thing. Let's make that change because those people have waited a long time.

Mr. John Vanthof: And they've lobbied a long time.

M^{me} France Gélinas: And they have lobbied a long time. Here's an opportunity to say, "Yes, when First Nations leadership speaks, when First Nations come to Queen's Park and ask to be heard, somebody actually listens. Somebody actually listens and acts." The ask is not of you, Speaker; the bill is right there in front of us. We can do that change.

1620

Electorally, 30 people voting one way or another is not going to change anything in the grand scheme of things,

but for those 30 people, it means that their government has listened to them. It means that their government has realized that although to the people in southern Ontario it may look like just a big swath of bush in the northeast, there are people who live there and the people who live there have a voice and deserve to be heard; that when they bring valuable concerns to the Legislative Assembly, that their government will listen to them, that they will act and they will fix the wrong.

But here I am, at third reading, having done everything that I thought would be possible: I spoke to the minister; the band council wrote, the band chief wrote; the chief came to Queen's Park, he talked to the minister—and it's not done. What else can we do so that First Nations get a voice with this government? What else can be done so that something so small that comes from the First Nation can actually be listened to, acted upon and respected?

I don't know what else can be done, but I hope that the members of the Liberal government who are listening right now will come to their senses and say, "We need to accept this amendment," where Wahnapiatae First Nation, which is part of the city of Greater Sudbury—the city knows that there are people there, and they service them. They pay their taxes, and they service Wahnapiatae First Nation as anybody else who lives within the city of Greater Sudbury—but not the provincial government.

The provincial government thinks that nobody lives in the bush. They draw a line on a map; they don't even care to see if anybody lives there. And when we tell them that there are families who live there, they got it wrong—they refuse to listen to them. Those people will continue to be in the electoral district of Timiskaming, which makes absolutely no sense. The speaker before me said that there is value in having an alignment between the federal boundaries and the provincial boundaries. I can assure you, Speaker, that at the federal level, Wahnapiatae is in Nickel Belt, because as I told you, they are a few kilometres away from Capreol, and they are about 20 kilometres from my constituency office, and it's the same thing with the constituency office of the federal NDP representative.

I don't get it. Everywhere else in Ontario, we want to align federal boundaries with provincial boundaries, and we go through a lot of trouble to make sure that all of the alignment is done and all of that, but when it comes to northern Ontario, I feel like we don't matter. I feel like they don't count. I feel like we don't count.

Well, they matter to me, Speaker. Those are people who should have been listened to by their government. Those are First Nation people who stood up, and came, and talked to their governments and were completely ignored; that's wrong. That's wrong at many, many levels.

If at least one of them would stand up and say, "We did this because"—is there a reason that nobody knows about that would make sense? I'm a reasonable person. If you talk to me, I guarantee you, I will listen. If there is a valid reason, well, tell me, and we'll all take it in and accept it and move on.

But they did not even have the decency to give us a reason why. They did not even have the decency to put in the effort to say, "We're not going to listen to those First Nations people; we're not going to listen to band council after band council, chief after chief who has come to this government to ask for this error to be corrected; we're just going to pretend that nothing has ever happened, and we're going to leave things as is." Well, leaving things as is means that you're leaving an error to continue to be there, and those people will remember.

So I would say, please look at the third reading. The amendments are still there. It's very easy. Add the boundaries of Wahnapiatae First Nation, which are really clear: One square kilometre will be in the riding of Nickel Belt and the rest of it stays as is. And if you're not going to do that, well, tell us why not. Don't just ignore us and leave us to make up why this happened—because frankly, Speaker, I can't figure it out. The chief of Elections Ontario tells us that this is how it has to be. I talked to—not the Auditor General; what is she called?—

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The Attorney General.

M^{me} France Gélinas:—the Attorney General, and she listened and she understood. She saw the map and she saw that it made sense, and she's driving this bill forward. What are we missing here? Why is it that when First Nations speak, they cannot be heard? Why is it that when people of the north bring concerns forward, they can be so easily ignored? That's wrong, Speaker. That's wrong, and it needs to change. It's not a big ask. It doesn't cost anything. It is a historical mistake that needs to be fixed. You have an opportunity to fix a historical mistake that affects a First Nation. Why would you say no to that? I don't get it. I don't get it.

But I get that I've used my time on the clock, so I will have to sit down. I will say to my colleagues on the Liberal side: You have an opportunity. This bill has not received third reading yet. Make that little change. Bring Wahnapiatae First Nation into Nickel Belt. We have an amendment. You can easily bring it forward. I will give you a chance. I can bring the amendment forward; you can bring the amendment forward—right or wrong.

We know that there have been lots of wrongs against our First Nations. When we have an opportunity to right one of those wrongs, why don't we take it?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm happy to have the opportunity this afternoon to speak to Bill 115, the Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015.

Basically, this bill was brought in because the federal boundaries—every 10 years or so they look at the population of the provinces, in this case Ontario, and see that there has to be some realignment so that we can keep the population within our ridings around, I think, 125,000, plus or minus 25% accuracy. So 15 new ridings were added, increasing the size of the Ontario Legislature to 122 members.

Now, this is mostly going to affect southern Ontario, and I want to say to the member from Nickel Belt that I

hear the concerns she has voiced. In northern Ontario, we keep one extra riding, compared to the federal boundaries; I just wanted to say that. In fact, when this bill was in committee, I think there was a presentation that said the northern ridings should actually have an ability to have their own separate appeal process.

What was just mentioned about a First Nation community that would like to come into her riding of Nickel Belt makes sense. With the boundary changes that are happening, I think the riding of Kenora–Rainy River might be bigger provincially than it is federally. Following up, because she has just spoken on the topic, I think she has some valid points for northern Ontario that we have to look at a little separately, because we have one extra riding—but also which communities are contained in which ridings up there. I give her full credit for bringing that up on behalf of the constituents and wannabe constituents in her riding.

I think it's easier if you follow federal boundaries in Ontario; I fully agree. It's less confusion for the people at home, as we say, if you have the same boundaries federally and provincially.

1630

I remember, in the days when my dad was a federal MP, there were, I think, at that time 30 more provincial ridings than federal ridings, so he crossed about three different provincial ridings in the one riding he represented federally. That was good for me, because I knew a lot of extra areas, but this happened in 1999, so by the time I was fortunate enough to be elected in the Legislature in 2003, we were mimicking the federal boundaries. Although it is a lot more area for us to represent, I do think it makes a lot of sense.

And, of course, who wants to see more politicians? Like the Fewer Politicians Act that we had—I think that's what it was called in 1999, when it first came in.

Other than that one mention I make of northern Ontario, we're not really disagreeing with the whole mimicking of the federal boundaries that we have here. I know that when the commission first came out, my riding was going to be cut in half, and it was like, "Wait a minute here. That doesn't make sense." My riding was literally going to be Lindsay to Lake Ontario, and then just north of Lindsay up to the boundary of Algonquin Park, over to Apsley and then over to the township of Uxbridge, which just made no sense at all.

I say that in this discussion because Haliburton and the city of Kawartha Lakes can fight among themselves a lot, but on this issue—that galvanized them. They loved each other again. They said, "No, no, we want to stay." Thankfully, the election boundaries commission listened to us, and they did the north-south riding instead of an east-west split. So I was thankful for that.

Unfortunately, I am losing parts of my riding, and my population is actually decreasing. I was saying, "Keep all my riding together as it exists now," because my population was decreasing. I mentioned earlier about that magic number, that they like to keep it at around 125,000 or so, roughly. Anyway, unfortunately, I'm losing two

parts of my riding, North Kawartha and the Trent Lakes part. I'm sad to see them change when the next election comes, but it's just the way that the boundaries ended up being. I will have less territory to travel, but I will definitely be missing them.

What's missing from this bill, I think, is the bigger part of this, and that's some Election Finances Act amendments. I know that our colleague on this side the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound introduced Bill 96, which was called the Special Interest Groups Election Advertising Transparency Act. Unfortunately, it was defeated back in October 2015. It's basically third-party advertising. I can get into a lot of details, but I won't get into too much. Basically, there's a lot of third-party advertising that occurs provincially. They have a law federally that that doesn't happen during a writ period.

Greg Essensa, the Chief Electoral Officer for Elections Ontario, brought this up when he was doing a report. He said it's an affront to democracy, and it is, because third-party advertising—especially being a member of the Progressive Conservative Party—has been pretty penalizing in campaigns. I think 21 groups advertised against us in the last provincial election, so we've seen that it has grown.

In the 2007 election, \$1.8 million was spent on third-party advertising. Then, in the 2011 election, it had grown to \$6 million, and it has just increased. I think it was \$21 million in the last election that had gone to—I'm sorry; it was \$8.6 million in the 2014 election. That's a lot of partisan messaging that we cannot, as a party—every party has spending caps, so we can't spend that type of money.

A proposed spending cap of \$150,000 was mentioned by Greg Essensa for third-party groups' advertising. That's the most they could spend in advertising. Certainly we all, as political parties, have caps that we have to either advertise within or have election spending within, but third-party advertising is outside that. When it has grown that much, that influences democracy and influences people's opinions and how they vote.

That was a very big piece of what we would have liked to have seen come in with this bill, and we would have liked to have seen all-party support for my colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound when he introduced that bill.

I know that throughout the elections—I've had four now—I consistently get problems with the lists. I'm sure all members, to a certain extent, have that. I know in one election—I think it was in 2007—I had the third-highest incorrect list in the province of Ontario. It's pretty frustrating for voters. You want to encourage voter turnout, but when you're not on the list and, election after election, you give them the correct information and then you're still not on the list, it does discourage people.

Greg Essensa, the Chief Electoral Officer, has certainly made some recommendations also on that, of creating a permanent voter ID list and oversight of that. Right now, I think the names on the provincial electors list come from a lot of different sources, but having a

permanent ID list for the provincial elections, for the province of Ontario, would be much more helpful.

The feds get a different list. As I said, when I have people on the federal election list who are not on the provincial election list, it drives people a little crazy and creates a lot of phone calls to all of our offices. That was brought up by Greg Essensa. The other thing, of course, was the third-party advertising. Those were the two biggest asks that he had of this government.

I'm hoping that the present government does, at some point, look at oversight with third-party advertising rules. Getting better data for permanent voters lists would also be more than helpful, and I then won't have to write any more letters to the Chief Electoral Officer to share all the complaints that I have in the riding.

We're certainly supporting this bill as it is. It makes sense that we mimic the federal boundaries in Bill 115. So I will say thank you for the time allotted today, and I think my colleague from Huron–Bruce wants to have a few comments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to speak in this House and today on Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act. What this bill is basically about is adjusting the boundaries for most of the ridings in the province to match the federal ridings. We don't disagree with that because, as population increases, people need to be represented, and so the number of ridings in southern Ontario is increasing because there are more people to represent. We have no problem with that at all.

This bill also keeps northern Ontario at 11 ridings. Again, we agree because in northern Ontario, the distances are vast. We don't have a problem with that. But we do have a problem—we put an amendment forward and I'm going to echo my colleague from Nickel Belt. I have a portion of my riding in Timiskaming–Cochrane—Timiskaming–Cochrane is a great riding, but there's one part of Timiskaming–Cochrane that doesn't fit. Why it doesn't fit: The Wahnapiatae First Nation is a kilometre square and Lake Wanapitei is a big body of water. The Wahnapiatae First Nation is on the opposite side of the Lake Wanapitei than the rest of Timiskaming–Cochrane. So, for the people from the Wahnapiatae First Nation to get service from a constituency office—from my constituency office—they've got about a day's travel ahead of them. But to get to the constituency office of my colleague in Nickel Belt, they've got 20 minutes of travel.

So it would make sense to move the Wahnapiatae First Nation to the riding of Nickel Belt, where they are actually served. The Wahnapiatae First Nation has been lobbying for this for years and years, as stated by the member from Nickel Belt. I remember the first time I met Chief Ted Roque, in 2007, the first time I ran. I asked him, "What is the number one issue in the Wahnapiatae

First Nation?" He said, "We're in the wrong riding. That's the number one issue."

So we took it upon ourselves, over the years, to try to fix this, and when this bill came forward, this was our opportunity. As the member from Nickel Belt stated, there are only a few opportunities and this is an opportunity to actually change this, this fault. The chief wants it, the people want it and both the members want it. It's not going to change anything in the big picture except that the people of Wahnapiatae First Nation are going to be much better served in the province of Ontario.

1640

So we let the government know when this bill was introduced. We let the government know at first reading. We let the government know at second reading. In the committee process, we put forward two amendments: basically, one amendment to move the Wahnapiatae First Nation out of the riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane, which at this point happens to be my riding, and into the riding of Nickel Belt, where they actually would be much better served. Pretty simple.

We all thought that this was actually a time when we could not spend a lot of money—actually, spend no money—and fix this. And the answer was no. The government members voted against these amendments. The answers: "Well, perhaps something might change in a few years." One of the members said, "Well, maybe we'll be able to vote electronically in a few years." This isn't about voting; this is about serving the people. That's the problem. Also, voting electronically in northern Ontario—first we'd like to have Internet before we decide to vote electronically. I brought that up, too—our public transportation.

But one of the things: "Well, maybe we could change this in three years." You know what, Speaker? There are a few things that aren't going to change. One of them—not in three days, three months, three years or 300 years—is that Lake Wanapitei is still going to be in the same place, and the people in the Wahnapiatae First Nation are going to be on the opposite side of Lake Wanapitei than the rest of the riding of Timiskaming-Cochrane. That makes absolutely no sense whatsoever.

The government seems to think that, yes, adjustments are good in southern Ontario, but in northern Ontario, we have one more riding but everything else should remain static; we shouldn't bother to fix small problems. And to the overall province, this is a small problem. But to the people of the Wahnapiatae First Nation, this is a huge problem that could be fixed.

To add insult to injury, as the government members were voting against this motion, in another part of the same building, the chief of the Wahnapiatae First Nation was here talking to the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Interjection: Good meeting.

Mr. John Vanthof: Great meeting—could be. But what frustrates people in northern Ontario and what sure frustrates the First Nations—and this is a perfect example—the government talks about consulting. To the First Nations, consulting means you talk and then you do

something. In this case, it's all talk, because even when it's something as small as moving this First Nation—a kilometre square, I believe—into the riding where they actually are serviced and actually belong? Oh, no, that's too much trouble. We were told in the committee here that perhaps we should collect some more information. For what? This government is obviously not interested in creating any kind of vehicle for this to actually be done, and that is what's so frustrating.

When the federal commission looked at the changes in the ridings, the changes that were discussed in northern Ontario don't apply because the northern ridings, federally and provincially, don't match. We're not arguing that. There are a lot of issues that are dealt with provincially. Some of my federal colleagues might disagree, but I'm pretty sure my provincial colleagues on all sides of the House—we deal with a lot more issues one-on-one with constituents than our federal colleagues do.

Hon. James J. Bradley: And get paid much less.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, I don't really care about that. But we deal with a lot more issues and that's why we need to be closer to the people. That's why there's one more riding in northern Ontario provincially than federally. But that doesn't preclude us even looking to see how we can perhaps better serve people within northern Ontario.

One of the comments from the government members was, "Well, if we do this, we might open the floodgates." Okay. You know what, Speaker? Let's open the floodgates. Every pocket of northern Ontario that has to drive through two other ridings to actually get to the constituency office, that happens to be on the wrong side of the lake, that happens to be a homogenous First Nation—let's open those floodgates, because I don't think you're going to see too many.

What this government could have done, what they should have done and the way that it was supposed to work—the government says, "Opposition always criticizes and they never give suggestions on how to move forward." Instead of time-allocating this bill, this government should have put the bill in the Legislature, done second reading. This bill isn't time-sensitive because the next election is two and a half years away.

They could have said, "You know what? In northern Ontario, because we haven't really looked at the riding boundaries, perhaps we will send a committee out to places where they have suggestions, like the Wahnapiatae First Nation." Isn't that a novel idea? Go talk to people where they actually live. Perhaps if the government members of that committee could start out at the constituency office in Sturgeon Falls, West Nipissing—which happens, at this point, to be my constituency office—we could take a tour down to the Wahnapiatae First Nation, drive through the riding of Sudbury, and drive through the town of Capreol in the riding of Nickel Belt, and perhaps then they would understand. That's how government would work. Then the committee could come back: "This one makes sense." We could actually serve the people.

But no, that's not what this government does. This government is so intent on—we often say this in the House—ramming things through and getting their own way. It's a majority government; they can get their own way. But just because you can do something, it doesn't mean it's a good idea. That's what this government is forgetting. This is a prime example.

On one hand, “Oh, we like to consult with the First Nations. We're going to work with the First Nations. We're going to do all these things with the First Nations.” And then on another floor of the building, they're saying, “You know what? It sucks to be you.” That's what they told Chief Ted Roque and his people that day: “It sucks to be you. We don't care.” They don't care if the members of the Wahnapiatae First Nation have to drive 10 hours to go to a constituency office. They don't care, because if they cared, they would have changed it, because it was within their power to change it. That's the beauty of a majority government: If you want to do things right, you can do great things. But if you don't want to, or if you don't care, you don't bother. This is a prime example.

They still have a chance to change it because this is not a new issue. I wasn't even aware until I listened to my colleague from Nickel Belt about how long this issue has actually been in the works. This has been in the works for a long, long time. And we did everything in our power. We did everything right; talked to the minister. I stood in this place, stood right here, and in second reading basically made almost the same speech, but at that time I thought there was a bit more hope because I thought somebody was actually going to move on the other side on something so simple.

People become disenchanted with government and disenchanted with a lot of things, and this is the reason why. I believe in the committee I got a bit upset and I said, “This example is what drives northerners nuts,” because we talk about the government—and various governments talk about, “Oh, we care about northern Ontario. We do all these things about northern Ontario.”

Really, on a lot of these issues, like this one—one square kilometre; Chief Ted Roque and his people—they basically say, “Oh, no, we don't want to open the floodgates. We're happy if these people have to drive 10 hours for whatever.”

1650

Something else, Speaker—and I'm sure most of my colleagues will agree, but especially those in northern Ontario and rural Ontario—constituency offices play a big role in northern Ontario. For a lot of issues—mental health issues, family violence issues—for a lot of those issues, the first place where they can actually find some help is in your constituency office. Unlike the city, we don't have—I'm from the country, and when I walk through the streets of Toronto, I'm surprised—pleasantly surprised—by how many services actually exist here; and that's a great thing. I'm proud to be from Ontario. But a lot of those services don't exist in the country, especially in northern Ontario, so we have to make do, and our northern colleagues of all stripes do; we do those things.

When we identify an issue, like Chief Ted Roque and the Wahnapiatae First Nation, who are in the wrong riding, we try and fix it. We weren't trying to make this a political issue—not at all. If the government had done what's right and actually accepted those two amendments, we would have said, “Thank you very much, government, for listening.” We've been working on this issue for years and years and years. The people of the Wahnapiatae First Nation would have been much, much better served, and everybody would have been happy. It would have been a win for the government and certainly a win for the Wahnapiatae First Nation, because they've been working for this for a long, long time. But instead, the government just decides, because they're in a hurry—for some reason, they're in a hurry—let's get this done before Christmas. They ignored, actually, the needs of the people.

I implore the Premier and the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, instead of using the empty words of “a good meeting” and “we want to consult,” to actually show that they truly do want to work with First Nations and take this issue—which, in the grand scheme of things, is a very small one, but it would be a beacon to show that this government is actually going to follow through—to, instead of just hollow talk, actually move on this issue and take the Wahnapiatae First Nation and put it in the riding of Nickel Belt, where it should be.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm actually pleased to be able to speak on Bill 115 today, the Electoral Boundaries Act, 2015.

As I kick off my remarks, I just want to comment on the member from Timiskaming. I appreciate your comments very much, and I might come back to them in a moment, in terms of the size of electoral ridings as well as connectivity, because you made very valid points.

You made the comment, “I like being from the country” or “I'm from the country.” I just wanted to say, “And I like it that way,” because I agree with you 100%. Do you know where that comes from? It's a good Alabama song.

Anyway, with that, Speaker—

Ms. Laurie Scott: We'll be singing it soon.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes, we'll be singing soon.

We want to talk about this particular bill, Bill 115, because it impacts the very foundations of our ridings. I can't be standing here today without commenting on how proud I am of having the honour of representing the riding of Huron-Bruce, on Ontario's west coast. It is one of the best ridings in this province.

But I'd be remiss if I didn't reflect on what today is. Today, we have our federal counterparts being sworn in for their next experience.

Ms. Soo Wong: Aw.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I thank you over there, from Scarborough—

Ms. Soo Wong: Scarborough—Agincourt.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes, thank you—Scarborough—Agincourt.

I want to congratulate my federal colleague the PC representative Ben Lobb for his re-election. I believe this will be his fourth or fifth term. He has done a great job representing our riding of Huron—Bruce as well.

With regard to Bill 115, this act would see the Representation Act, 2005, which defines our current 107 electoral districts, repealed.

Again, for the people watching or just tuning in, if they can't sleep tonight and they're passing the time, Bill 115 is all about repealing former regulations and legislation that define our current 107 electoral districts. We want to make sure we're aligned with the federal boundaries that were created back in 2013 by the federal government.

Bill 115 will also amend the Election Finances Act to ensure that our riding associations and constituency organizations reflect the shift that would take place in the Legislative Assembly Act to allow for these extra seats, as well as the Election Act.

Mirroring our provincial ridings with those of the federal electoral districts has been an initiative that we in the PC Party have advocated for, and we first did this back in the 1990s, under the premiership of Mike Harris. But the changes that we reflect upon now in 2015, according to the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission, occur, when warranted, every 10 years after the census is conducted and the number of electoral districts and their boundaries are revised to reflect population shifts and growth.

For Ontario, this change would mean 15 new ridings to mirror those—such as Markham—Stouffville, Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill, Markham—Thornhill, Don Valley North, Scarborough—Rouge Park, University—Rosedale, Mississauga Centre, Brampton North, Brampton South, Milton, Oakville North—Burlington, Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas, Kitchener South—Hespeler, Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte, Bay of Quinte and Nepean—at the federal level.

Speaker, you didn't hear many rural ridings in that list of 15 new electoral ridings. With that, I just want to share that these shifts are important because we need to make sure Ontarians have representatives in terms of equity, and those electoral ridings are based on approximately 100,000 people per riding. We have to recognize where Ontario's growing, but I do echo the importance that the member from Timiskaming—Cochrane was sharing earlier, in that even though we need to recognize where the growth in Ontario is happening, we need to make sure that all ridings and all areas of this province move forward. Just because we're creating 15 new ridings doesn't mean that priorities should shift. We need to make sure that both urban and rural issues and priorities are moving forward.

I'm not necessarily suggesting there needs to be equity, but rural Ontario, northern Ontario and urban Ontario need to be moving forward. That's the importance behind my statement there. Again, it will never happen in

tandem, but every riding deserves proper representation and we have to make sure we've got that.

Another issue that I would like to touch on is the size of ridings. I recognize that electoral ridings are developed around the approximate size of 1,000 people, but—

Ms. Laurie Scott: A hundred thousand people.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: A hundred thousand people; thank you. But it's the size of the ridings that also needs to be appreciated.

Again, we heard from the representatives in the north. They were very passionate and eloquent in raising their voices about the concerns in their particular ridings. But I have to tell you, to do justice to the riding of Huron—Bruce—to circle the entire riding from Chesley in the northeast through to Saugeen in the northwest, down to Grand Bend, over to Whalen Corners in the southeast and back up through Hanover and crossing over to Chesley again—it takes me over eight hours to circle that riding. I have a huge riding. Every community matters in that riding. Again, I can't express what an honour it is to represent the riding of Huron—Bruce, but the size of it unto itself causes a little bit of frustration on my part because I can't be in all places at all times. But we have to embrace the technology and the evolutions that are happening, and that is through the world of technology.

1700

The member from Timiskaming—Cochrane touched on connectivity. In my riding of Huron—Bruce, we have areas that are on dial-up. We do not have the high-speed connection that so many other Ontarians just take for granted at their fingertips. But I'm pleased to say that the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus is addressing this. We're working with them to make sure that we can proceed and get that high-speed connectivity, because if everyone is connected in an equitable way, guess what? Here in Ontario, when it comes to elections, perhaps we can take that step forward and enable people to, no matter where they are in this province, no matter what riding they live in, perhaps someday embrace a recommendation, which my colleague from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock talked about, from Greg Essensa, in the sense that technology needs to be embraced to enable people to vote from home.

We're seeing different methods tested at the municipal level. Some municipalities have allowed mail-in votes to be cast, while other ones have, indeed, embraced electronic voting. I think we do need to move forward in that regard, because—for goodness' sake—it is 2015 and we need to taking into serious consideration the recommendations that have come forward.

One of the recommendations that the Chief Electoral Officer made in his 2013-14 annual report was around the need to improve access to voting as well. Currently, right now, a vast number of elementary and high schools are used as voting stations. In his report, he recognized that, while the access is good, the reality is that it disrupts the school day. It was just another proof point that we need to really be thinking about how to advance voting in 2015 in this province of Ontario.

Another issue that I think is prudent to address at this stage of the game, with the by-election coming up in Whitby–Oshawa, is the need to make sure that third-party advertising is addressed. We've seen too many times where third parties come in and they skew the issues. People get confused. I remember back actually in 2014 that there were ads hitting the airwaves well ahead of the writ being dropped, and they were from particular unions that were bashing the leader of the PC Party at the time. It's not acceptable.

You know what? We need to make sure that democracy is not skewed, is not upset by third-party advertising with their hidden agendas. We have to make sure—for goodness' sake—that some of these organizations that do go forward with third-party advertising—

Hon. James J. Bradley: We need to have something to counteract the Toronto Sun.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Minister without portfolio, come to order.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: —do not receive funding from the government, like we heard with the \$1-million gold-plated pepperoni issue. That has to stop as well, because we all know what that money really is going towards.

When we talk about the need for Bill 115 and streamlining acts and putting them into plain English as they are read and used, we'll be doing our part to educate and mould a more informed and engaged Ontario. Speaker, that's what we really want. We want to make sure that the communication highways are not cluttered with third-party advertising, we want to make sure that access is available throughout all of Ontario, and we want to make sure that people are engaged so that we can vote.

I would just like to go back and make note of the fact that in 2011, Huron–Bruce actually had the highest electoral turnout. I'm very proud of that. In 2014, we had the second-highest turnout. I hope that with some of these improvements through Bill 115, all of the ridings across Ontario will have better voter turnout as well.

While the PC Party supports amending electoral boundaries to ensure consistency with our federal counterparts and a more engaged Ontario, we caution that there are other steps that were noted by the electoral officer to make the whole system better. So let's all work together to make sure that at the end of the day, in 2018, as many Ontarians as possible are engaged, want a difference and can get out and vote with easy access.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate? Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 3, 2015, I am now required to put the question.

Madame Meilleur has moved third reading of Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."
In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

But don't you dare change that dial. We have a vote deferral:

"To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly:

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on third reading of Bill 115 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, December 2, 2015."

Third reading vote deferred.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Michael Gravelle: A point of order, Mr. Speaker, if I may: I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that, notwithstanding standing order 81(c), the order for resuming the debate adjourned on the motion for third reading of Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act, may be called during orders of the day this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

SMART GROWTH FOR OUR COMMUNITIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR UNE CROISSANCE INTELLIGENTE DE NOS COLLECTIVITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 1, 2015, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act / Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise and speak in third reading debate on Bill 73, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act. I want to thank all the people and organizations who took time to share their comments and concerns on this bill; organizations who sent written submissions with the committee, who shared with them and with me over the last eight months since this bill was introduced; and those people who took time to meet with me and my colleagues to talk about the impact of this bill on their organizations, industries or municipalities.

I want to recognize all of the organizations who came forward at committee to express their concerns about Bill 73 and to outline amendments that would make it better. After a long discussion at committee, we were able to get three days of committee hearings, which meant that there was enough time for 40 people or organizations to present.

We know that there was limited time to apply. I heard from a stakeholder who checked the legislative website on Friday, October 23 at 4 p.m., and there was no notice of the hearings. I know that the advertising didn't take place until after the committee met, on Monday, October

26. But by the deadline, less than three days later, we had 40 applicants to speak, enough to fill every single spot.

We received written submissions from more organizations that weren't able to come. In fact, in their written submission, the Federation of Citizens' Associations of Ottawa-Carleton said, "We question why, as Ontario's second-largest city, Ottawa should have to be omitted from a round of consultation meetings or a video hookup."

Bill 73 had more hearings than many other bills that have gone through this Legislature recently, and there still was more interest for more hearings.

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We've said that we will acknowledge when the government does something right, so I want to recognize that everyone who came to make a presentation appreciated the fact that the government agreed to more hearings on this bill and gave people a little more time to present.

The presenters raised some valid concerns about the bill, some challenges it would create and some of the unintended consequences. The written statement from Ken Seiling, regional chair from Waterloo and chair of MARCO, said, "Bill 73, as tabled, is an improvement; however, it does not go far enough and too much is left to enactment through future regulations." We heard their concerns. We raised those concerns during clause-by-clause and brought forward amendments to make this bill better.

Before I get into the detail and the concerns and the amendments, I want to take a minute to talk generally about municipal legislation. I've been lucky to see this legislation from a number of different sides: as a municipal politician, as chair of ROMA, as a cabinet minister and, now, as opposition critic. Whenever a government amends legislation that impacts municipalities, I think there are a few guiding principles that need to be followed.

The first principle is that we need to respect the municipalities as a mature level of government. Members of council are duly elected by their constituents. They have been entrusted with the responsibility of delivering the services that their constituents need, managing the finances and planning for the future. We need to respect the faith that their constituents have shown in their municipal government and respect that government's knowledge of their own local needs.

This brings me to the second principle: There cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to municipal legislation. We need to recognize that each municipality is unique and that challenges faced by Toronto are vastly different than those faced by remote northern municipalities; that the challenges faced by the town of Whitby are vastly different than those faced by Pelee Island. We need to ensure that there is enough flexibility within the legislation that it will work for those communities and everyone in between.

The third principle is balance. I want to acknowledge that there are a number of places in Bill 73 where the government got that balance right—and I say "a number

of places." Balance is particularly important for this bill. It's about balance between protecting public consultation and not delaying the projects, balance between laying out the process to ensure fairness to all and not creating red tape, and balance between making housing affordable and funding infrastructure.

We all understand that municipalities are struggling to make ends meet. The Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund cuts, the power dam special payment program cuts, emergency funding that takes years to deliver, new demands for forms and reports to be completed—Mr. Speaker, it all adds up.

As AMO president Gary McNamara said, during his speech at the AMO conference this year, "Financially, there is a little bite here and a little bite there." He's speaking about provincial downloading.

He also said:

"What's \$50,000 here? What's another \$50,000 there?"

"Well, it's far more than they seem to appreciate."

"Almost half of Ontario's municipalities have to hike property taxes by at least one full per cent to raise \$50,000."

Just recently, the government announced the 2016 Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund grants allocation and confirmed that they are cutting another \$10 million out of the program. That brings the cuts, over the last four years, to over \$70 million.

A number of communities in my riding—the town of Ingersoll, the township of Blandford-Blenheim, the township of East Zorra-Tavistock, the township of South-West Oxford and the township of Zorra—have all seen their municipal partnership fund grants cut by half over the past four years. All of this makes it difficult to balance the budget and deliver the services that people depend on, but making up for provincial cuts by putting all those costs onto housing just isn't the solution.

In their submission on Bill 73, the region of Halton laid out the funding challenges that they are having and why they needed additional funding from development. As they said, "Alternatively, the province needs to once again become a funding partner to help fund significant upfront growth-related infrastructure."

We support the concept of growth paying for growth, Mr. Speaker, but the provincial government cannot continue to look at development charges as a way to make up for underfunding Ontario's municipalities. If they do, it will make our housing problems worse.

We already have a serious housing affordability problem in Ontario, and we acknowledge that it's not an easy problem to fix.

As Social Planning Toronto said during their presentation:

"Over the past 10 years, the average cost of housing ownership has increased by 87%, with the average cost of a single detached home at over \$1 million and the average cost of a resale home at about \$635,000. At these prices, only households with incomes in the top 20% can afford to own."

"People who work in Toronto often commute long distances to get to work simply because they cannot afford the high cost of housing."

Social Planning Toronto was here primarily to support inclusionary zoning, but I think their point is important in the broader discussion, too.

The Royal Bank of Canada's annual housing affordability study found that the cost of both bungalows and two-storey homes in Ontario are at a record high. In the report, they stated, "Clearly, owning a single detached home in Ontario at market prices has become a stretch for a typical household in key parts of the province such as Toronto."

We cannot solve the affordability crisis without looking at the whole spectrum of housing, from home ownership to social housing. There are many people who support building more affordable housing who, at the same time, are pushing to increase the costs that builders face—costs that are passed on to the new homeowner or the renter. That just doesn't make sense. Development charges are not an endless source of infrastructure money; every dollar comes from a new homeowner or a renter. Increasing development charges forces those prices out of reach for some families.

As I pointed out during my speech on second reading, development charges are already a significant amount. The Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association reported that for a \$440,000 family home, over \$25,000 goes to development charges. The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario commissioned a report called *Alternatives to Development Charges for Growth-Related Capital Costs*. It found that development charges are now \$30,000 to \$50,000 per single-family home in high-growth municipalities surrounding Toronto. By comparison, it found that development fees in Calgary and Edmonton are less than \$8,000 per unit.

The Ontario Home Builders' Association said during their presentation: "Transit development charges are an important financing tool, but it is important to recognize that they are built into the cost of new homes along with an extensive series of other taxes, fees and charges that governments place on new housing.... These charges are ultimately absorbed and paid for by the new neighbour and ... paid off through their individual long-term mortgages."

As buying a home becomes out of reach, more people rely on rental properties, which puts up the demand and cost, forcing people to rely on social housing. Even the federal Liberals recognize this. In his mandate letter, the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development was asked not just to look at social housing, but also tasked with "undertaking a review of escalating home prices in high-priced housing markets and considering all policy tools that could keep home ownership within reach for more Canadians."

This bill has the potential to force up the cost of new homes and new rentals by allowing the development charge increases. To solve this problem over the long term, we need to look at addressing the factors and

policies that impact the cost of housing. However, it appears this government is taking the opposite approach. The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing has stated that he is looking for new revenue tools for municipalities. This includes another tax that would dramatically increase the cost of housing: the municipal land transfer tax. There was so much noise about that in the last few weeks, and my colleague Mr. Clark introduced a motion to stop that from happening. It seems, finally, the minister saw the light and cancelled that today during question period. I know many of us have heard from constituents who do not want this additional tax on their home ownership.

The government is also forcing up the cost of living every day. Housing costs aren't just the price of renting an apartment or purchasing a house. Factors such as the spiralling cost of hydro are contributing to the problem too. In fact, in some of our communities, hydro bills alone are forcing seniors out of their homes.

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All of these costs are causing more and more families to need social housing. There are now 168,000 families on the waiting list for affordable housing, a record high. In fact, in the last five years alone, the waiting lists have increased by more than 27,000 families. The changes in this legislation have the potential to put the cost of housing out of reach for more and more families.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 73 proposes to move the list of which services are ineligible for development charges into regulations, which would open the door to huge increases in the cost of home ownership or renting. All of these costs get factored into the price that builders or landlords charge, and force up the cost of housing. That's why we couldn't support the NDP amendment that would have taken all restrictions off eligible services. It is also why we put forward an amendment that would have, once again, legislated that the provision of culture or entertainment facilities, including museums, theatres, and art galleries, tourism facilities and the provision of hospitals, will not be eligible for development charges.

When Bill 37 was announced, the government's news release said it would "allow municipalities to recover capital costs for waste diversion" through development charges. Our amendment would have allowed that change that the government publicly announced, but would ensure that a young family, a senior on a fixed income or a single parent isn't priced out of home ownership because they are forced to pay for tourism facilities or an art gallery that really isn't part of the growth at all—or a hospital: Health care is a provincial responsibility, Mr. Speaker. Homeowners and renters have already paid for hospitals through their income taxes. They shouldn't be paying again through their mortgages.

During the parliamentary committee hearings, the parliamentary assistant said, "Bill 73 proposes to identify ineligible services exclusively through regulations to provide greater flexibility to make changes to the list of ineligible services as we progress." That means the

government is giving themselves the ability to increase development charges by adding more eligible services. It also means that they will be making those decisions which impact the cost of housing behind closed doors.

I would say to them, when you make those decisions, remember that those costs don't come out of the pockets of developers. They come from the people who are struggling to buy their first home. They are paid by the renters who are struggling every month to make ends meet. These decisions end up impacting the affordability of housing across the whole spectrum.

Mr. Speaker, we need to address the factors such as development charges that are driving up the cost of housing, but we also need to ensure that money intended for social housing actually goes to help families in need. I've spoken over and over in this House about the money intended for social housing that is still being misused. Money that was intended to go to affordable housing instead is going to European trips, luxury South African vacations, \$8 water and \$300 flannel shirts.

Everyone who has read the government's independent review, as I did, knows that none of these expenses were investigated in the review that the minister speaks about and that that review failed to look at where those funds were coming from. All of that money, Mr. Speaker, is coming from the Housing Services Corp. overcharging social housing providers for natural gas and insurance.

Toronto Community Housing estimated that they could save \$6.3 million in a single year if the minister allowed them to opt out of buying gas from the Housing Services Corp. Imagine how many people that could have helped. The spending problem at Housing Services Corp. isn't solved, and it's costing social housing providers and municipalities.

Last week we asked why the region of Waterloo was forced to pay Housing Services Corp. \$10,000 this fall just to be allowed to opt out of buying through the HSC and to purchase the same insurance from a less expensive source. As Waterloo regional councillor Ken Seiling said last week, "We've always said that we didn't see the need for a social housing corporation and if the province wants to support the other municipalities they should do that directly and not through us." Allowing social housing providers to opt out of Housing Services Corp. will help them and it will help municipalities.

At the beginning, I mentioned the financial burden that municipalities are facing. Part of that burden is the additional cost and requirements the province continues to force onto municipalities. Bill 73 will once again increase those requirements. While we support the increased transparency and accountability, we need to recognize that each new statement or report adds to the burden on municipalities. As the town of Whitby said in their submission, "This legislation, as proposed, will increase the amount of staff time and overall costs associated with the implementation and reporting."

During my second reading speech, I asked the minister to review the requirements on municipalities and to eliminate an unneeded burden for every new burden that

this act adds. I have seen no evidence that the government has taken any steps to do that. In fact, when we put forward amendments that municipalities asked for, to help reduce some of the burdens on municipalities, the government rejected each and every one of them.

One of the concerns that municipalities raised was that they were being asked to conduct official plan reviews so frequently that they barely finished a review before they would be asked to start the next one. Bill 73 takes a good first step in recognizing this and changes the review period following a new official plan from five to 10 years. But any subsequent reviews are still required to be completed every five years.

As the county of Renfrew said in their submission, "The five-year review cycle comes around very quickly and places a strain on the resources of municipalities, and puts them in a constant state of review, at the expense of other planning initiatives."

The chief planner for the city of Toronto said, "The situation we're in right now is that we're in a constant process of official plan review. We're never done because we get it reviewed and, because of the legislative requirement, we have to begin again. A 10-year period would give us somewhat of a breathing room in order to get on with the work of implementing the official plan."

We put forward an amendment that recognized the time and resources required for an official plan review and would have changed the requirement for all reviews to not less than 10 years. This would make the timing consistent with the requirements for the new official plans and the provincial policy statements under Bill 73. All of it would be reviewed every 10 years. We were disappointed that the government voted down this amendment.

We have repeatedly pointed out that the government cannot continue to place new burdens on municipalities without reviewing and eliminating some of the existing burdens, and we will continue to raise this concern.

For instance, Bill 73 adds a requirement for upper-tier municipalities to have an advisory panel which includes one member from the public. Mr. Speaker, one member of the public on an advisory panel doesn't result in public consultation. So this committee would just end up being a burden on municipalities without providing a real benefit to either the planning process or the public.

AMO strongly objects to the mandatory requirement for the planning advisory committee. In their presentation, they said, "This idea of mandatory planning advisory committees was tried in the past and was abandoned. It created confusion as to the legislative role of councils and what the accountability framework of public advisers is, and again involves another administrative practice."

The county of Renfrew said, "Most, if not all, of" our "county colleagues have standing committees of county council which have served their communities well as reporting vehicles on planning matters. It is difficult to see how requiring the creation of another committee at the upper tier streamlines the planning process or enhances local autonomy."

In Oxford, the planning discussions happen with full council in open meetings, where the public and the media can attend. I'm concerned that creating a planning advisory committee would take these discussions out of the open meeting and put them into a backroom.

As the county of Oxford said in their submission, "They also insert an additional step into the decision-making process, which may not be necessary or advisable in a particular municipal context and can impact the timeliness and the cost of local planning processes."

We put forward an amendment to make these planning advisory committees optional, as they are for the lower-tier municipalities. It would give the municipalities the flexibility to consult the public and make planning decisions in a way that works for their local municipality. But again, the government chose not to listen to us or the municipalities and voted down the amendment.

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Bill 73 also adds new requirements for asset management plans. We believe that asset management plans are a useful tool and we agree that they are necessary for effective planning. However, we need to ensure that the requirements for new asset management plans are all consistent so municipalities can build on research and planning that they have already done effectively.

As Ken Seiling, the regional chair of Waterloo, said during his presentation, "I'm not arguing against asset management plans. We believe in them and we're doing them, but the fact that some of these are required in different forms by different government agencies for funding a specific requirement—and that doesn't take into account all those broad things—is problematic."

The Municipal Finance Officers' Association said, "Municipalities should be permitted to augment existing asset management plans using existing approaches and methodologies. Development of these plans requires considerable staff time and financial resources, and requiring asset management plans to be redone to a new methodology would place a burden on a number of municipalities."

We raised this concern during the clause-by-clause, and want to raise it again to ask the government to ensure that the regulations around asset management plans allow municipalities to build on existing plans, rather than starting from scratch.

One of the most disappointing parts of the clause-by-clause was that on many issues, the government simply refused to listen to municipalities. One of the strong examples was the concern raised by the fact that Bill 73 would void co-operative agreements that have been signed between municipalities and developers. We heard from municipalities that they have already done their research and planning and, based on that, have negotiated agreements with builders—agreements that will be voided under Bill 73.

One of the municipalities that presented to the committee was the city of Pickering. During his presentation, the director of corporate services and city solicitor said, "As required by the provincial plan for Seaton, the city

has conducted a detailed fiscal impact study surveying the infrastructure demands. Based on the results of that study, the city has negotiated an agreement with the province and with the private landowners in Seaton to provide for the equitable sharing of infrastructure costs among all the parties. This agreement provides, in part, that the private landowners shall make payments to the city over and above the development charges which are payable under the act. This agreement is crucial because without it, Seaton is not fiscally viable. I need to be completely clear about this: Seaton can't proceed without this financial agreement in place, and development charges alone are manifestly insufficient for the financing of the necessary infrastructure."

Mr. Speaker, let's be clear: This is a provincial development plan. The provincial government told the city of Pickering to negotiate with the builders to share the infrastructure costs, and now they are passing legislation that would prohibit those exact agreements. This is creating a real challenge for the city of Pickering, because the government members on the committee didn't sound like they heard it. When the city solicitor finished his presentation, they asked him a single question and they didn't put forward any amendments to try and solve this issue.

Another municipality which came to speak to the issue was the city of Barrie. As you know, they are forecast to have significant growth between 2011 and 2041; they are forecast to have an almost 90% increase in their population. The city of Barrie did their research and planning to ensure that growth is done correctly. As the mayor said during his presentation to the committee, "The city and the development community worked collaboratively, sharing data and collectively analyzing the costs of building, maintaining, operating and replacing infrastructure. The result was a trio of important documents: a comprehensive asset management plan, a fiscal impact assessment and an infrastructure implementation plan."

Based on that work, the developers and the city of Barrie together came up with an agreement that will ensure that Barrie will build the necessary infrastructure. Then the city planned their public works and their budget based on that agreement and the additional revenue. But now, Bill 73 would void that agreement.

When he was asked about the impact of having that agreement prohibited by this legislation, Mayor Lehman said, "I hesitate to speculate about the legal impact. The practical impact for our municipality would be an inability to implement a capital plan that is entirely in conformity with the growth policies of the province, and an inability to move forward with careful, well-thought-out planning that's been agreed with by the development community."

Again, it didn't seem as if the government members on the committee really listened. When they had the opportunity to ask the mayor questions, they asked what he thought of the community development permit system—nothing to do with his presentation.

We understand the difficulty that voiding these agreements causes for those municipalities that have planned, worked out agreements and budgeted based on this money in good faith. That's why we put forward an amendment that would have grandfathered existing voluntary agreements. Our amendment would have ensured that there was no double-charging on services.

Under Bill 73, a number of new services are eligible for development charges. If a municipality passes a development charge bylaw for a new service that was in the co-operative agreement, it would void that. When I asked the mayor of Barrie about these new services, he said, "Sure, and we would certainly agree to maintain our side of the agreement. There would be no notion of renegotiating charges already established within the agreement."

This concern wasn't just raised by municipalities. In their written submission, the Ontario Home Builders' Association supported this section of the bill, but said, "It is important that existing agreements are protected under the newly amended legislation."

When it came time for the amendments, the government didn't put forward a single amendment to the section, which voids existing voluntary agreements, and they voted down our amendments, which would have solved this problem for municipalities like Barrie and Pickering. I will be interested to hear from the member from Barrie, the member from Oakville, the member from Ajax-Pickering and the member from Pickering-Scarborough East on this issue and whether they agree with their municipalities or whether they agree with the government.

Mr. Speaker, these municipalities are not the only ones impacted by the changes to voluntary agreements. According to the Municipal Finance Officers' Association, in 2013 only 204 municipalities collected development charges. In some of these communities, there is limited development. It may be so infrequent or of such a size that it isn't practical to spend the time or money necessary for studies to create a development charges bylaw.

Many of these municipalities deal with these infrequent developments or unusual circumstances through co-operative agreements between the municipality and the developer, but Bill 73 prohibits creating these voluntary agreements. As Watson and Associates said during their presentation, "If a small municipality that doesn't have a" development charge "bylaw has maybe a shopping mall, maybe has an industry, maybe has a big box store that's being built, there are a lot of localized services they would ask for. 'Put in a taper lane. Put in signalization. Put in sidewalks.' The way it's written right now, I would deem that they're not able to recover those costs. So they're either forced into a development charge process or they're not allowed to recover these costs."

We understand that the government's goal is to ensure that builders are not blackmailed into paying additional costs that wouldn't be allowed as a development charge, but as we heard from municipalities and developers, these agreements are needed.

The Building Industry and Land Development Association said during their presentation, "However, what Bill 73 fails to acknowledge is that there are instances involving co-operative agreements where a developer agrees to make payment, to advance required infrastructure that is found in the approved municipal development background studies of the municipality and is in the best interests of the municipality and community."

I'm disappointed that the government didn't listen to these organizations that took the time to come and present to the committee to explain how this would create a challenge for many of our smaller communities. In some cases, they didn't even explain why they voted against the amendments. That's ironic, considering that one of the changes in Bill 73 is that it adds a number of requirements for councils to provide "a brief explanation of the effect, if any, that the written and oral submissions mentioned in subsection ... had on the decision." It sounds like a great theory, but in reality, it's just not practical.

Think of the city of Toronto, which deals with thousands and thousands of applications every year. There may be multiple reasons that councillors made the decision to vote as they did. Interviewing each of the 44 councillors to determine the impact of written or oral submissions simply isn't feasible.

We also heard concerns from a number of municipalities and on their behalf from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. AMO president Gary McNamara said during his presentation, "We ask that how oral submissions are to be accomplished should be the prudent choice of a municipality based on local circumstances and not arbitrarily regulated by the province."

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While we are supportive of sharing oral arguments, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute said, "The province should, however, consider providing some guidance that will help implementation and allow for some flexibility for the general summary of comments because it does get a little bit challenging to make sure that you're dealing with things comprehensively."

It's interesting that the government chose to vote against some of these amendments without providing comments. In fact, if the government members were asked to explain what part of the written or oral presentation influenced their decision to vote, I think the government members would have been hard pressed to do so, Mr. Speaker. They would have had trouble explaining how they could vote against these amendments when they heard from so many organizations that these changes would be a challenge.

I want to again commend the people and organizations who took time to share their concerns on this bill, whether it was in meetings, written submissions or presenting at committee.

When the government moved closure on second reading of this bill, the member for Eglinton-Lawrence said, "I think we need to hear from the people out there. It's critically important to hear from ordinary citizens.

The people need to be heard on this bill because it affects all of our communities.”

The presenters gave some positive comments, but they also came with well-thought-out and researched comments and requested amendments. Some of them were small changes that would have simply made the act work better, but when it came down to it, the government didn't listen. They passed one amendment for us and two amendments for the NDP and refused, in reality, to consider anything else.

I want to commend the NDP critic for municipal affairs and housing. We may not always agree on policy, but the amendments he put forward showed he was listening. The government members even voted down an NDP amendment that would have added the definition of “affordable” to the act. It wasn't that they disagreed with the definition, because the amendment would have made the definition the same as it is in the provincial policy statement. It's difficult to believe that the government members are really listening and open to working with stakeholders and other parties when they vote down a definition and do nothing to help municipalities like Barrie and Pickering that will have challenges because of this bill.

There was one exception, and I want to acknowledge it. One of the concerns that we heard from numerous organizations and municipalities was regarding sections of Bill 73 that would have put a two-year freeze on official plan amendments after the introduction of a new plan, on bylaw amendments following a comprehensive or global zoning bylaw, and on minor variances.

In fact, we heard concerns about the freeze from AMO; the county of Renfrew; Ontario Home Builders' Association; the town of Whitby; the Ontario Professional Planners Institute; the town of Bracebridge; Owen Sound; the township of Admaston/Bromley; the city of Vaughan; Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association; Timmins Chamber of Commerce; Sudbury chamber of commerce; Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce; the city of Hamilton; the county of Haliburton and more.

The city of Hamilton said during their presentation, “To provide no avenue through which these sorts of amendments can be made, even when they're supported by planning staff and council, could put a bit of a chill on development, and obviously none of us wants to do that.”

The township of McKellar passed a resolution that said that “the specific changes related to the restriction of official plan, zoning bylaw amendments and minor variance applications after new official plans and zoning bylaws may be problematic and result in obstructions and delays for development in the northern communities of the province.”

The township of Admaston/Bromley said in a written submission, “If the variance is minor, it is already an expensive and lengthy process for residents, and it may discourage them from being forthcoming on something minor.”

In their submission, AMO supported the need for exceptions to the two-year freeze and pointed out,

“Rural-based municipal governments are largely dependent on single-activity or lot-based-activity applications brought forward by an individual who sees an economic opportunity.”

We understand that the freeze on minor variance was in response to some decisions that allowed extra stories to be added to buildings as a minor variance. We do not believe that minor variances should be a way to get around the zoning process, but the solution is to do a better job of defining and enforcing that these minor variances are truly minor, not to put major roadblocks in the way of all buildings.

We heard from one builder that has successfully applied for a minor variance for less than a metre in extra height to raise the level of the ground floor to accommodate the city's 100-year-storm overland flow route. They said that if they had not been able to apply for a minor variance, it would have delayed the project and resulted in extra costs. They also said that if a minor variance were not an option, they likely would not have accepted such a restrictive zoning bylaw and would have gone to the Ontario Municipal Board instead.

We put forward amendments to solve this issue, and I want to give the government credit: They did, as well. Of course, the government voted down our amendments, but we were happy to support their amendments that achieved the same goal because it made the bill better for municipalities and local economies.

Mr. Speaker, municipal affairs is a busy portfolio. Over the next few years, they will be dealing with a number of reviews and pieces of legislation: the Municipal Act, the City of Toronto Act, the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act and the Municipal Elections Act. Although the coordinated land use review is ongoing and the Ontario Municipal Board review hasn't started, this bill contains some changes that impact both of those areas.

When I spoke to this bill last spring, I pointed out that the changes that impacted appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board were premature. The Minister of Municipal Affairs has been tasked with the review of the Ontario Municipal Board through his mandate letter, so to make a few changes in isolation doesn't make sense. That was reinforced during the clause-by-clause, when government members repeatedly opposed amendments and said, “We should wait for the OMB review.” It's interesting that the Liberals think it's fine to make changes without conducting the review, but don't think that anyone else should be allowed to do so.

As you know, we are expecting the report of the coordinated land use review panel shortly, but Bill 73 already contains a section that would prohibit appeals of these boundaries on municipal official plans. Mr. Speaker, that makes sense. Municipalities should not be put in a position of spending resources and defining a boundary that the province imposes upon them. What does not make sense is that there is no method of appealing these boundaries and correcting errors. The example that I've used before for is the property that was included in the greenbelt because municipal affairs staff

thought that there was a waterway on the property; when it turned out that the waterway was actually on a neighbour's property, there was no way to correct the error. I hope that the advisory panel that's doing the study now will propose a solution to that problem and that the government will be willing to accept it.

We can and should do better at listening to people who are impacted by provincial policies, whether it's a boundary or Bill 73. In many places, Bill 73 is a step in the right direction, but it could have been much better. We could have avoided the financial and legal challenges that Pickering and Barrie will face. We could have made sure that municipalities without development charge bylaws could co-operate with builders to put infrastructure in place for their communities and their development. We could have done much more to make housing affordable. We could have listened to the people who were going to be impacted and taken more steps to make sure that this legislation works for them.

Again, I want to thank all the people who took the time to share their concerns and point out where this legislation missed the mark. I hope, as we work through the upcoming reviews and the pieces of legislation that the government is talking about updating, that we will be able to get it right, that we will ensure that we hear from all the people and organizations who are impacted, and that everyone will be willing to take steps to address those concerns.

Thank you very much for allowing me this opportunity to speak to the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France G  linas: It was very interesting listening to the member from Oxford go into quite a bit of detail as to what Bill 73 is doing, but also what Bill 73 could have done. There's always an opportunity cost when a piece of legislation does not get opened very often, and when a piece of legislation is open, I think it is important for us to make sure that we get it right.

He has identified a number of steps that are going in the right direction, but he's also identified a number of steps that could have been taken to make things better. One that he talked about is, really, the need to wait for the OMB review so that we can see how we can put in place a method to appeal. If you get the boundaries wrong, then there should be a way to appeal, like any other decision. We try to get them right, but sometimes when they are complex, when a lot of information needs to be taken into account when we make those decisions, there are bits and pieces that we get wrong.

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I had a case in point this afternoon when I showed that the Wahnapi  e First Nation should be in the riding of Nickel Belt, not in the riding of Timiskaming. But there is no way to appeal this, no matter how well intended everybody wants to be. Coming back to this bill, it's the same thing. There is no way to appeal some of those boundary decisions that are made.

One glaring omission in Bill 73 has to do with housing. It has to do with affordable housing and the need to do more. Certainly, my caucus supports that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? The member from—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Northumberland—Quinte West.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: Thank you, Speaker. You have so many of us helping you tonight, just trying to make your job easier.

It does give me pleasure to speak for a couple of minutes on the comments from the member from Oxford. Yes, we sat on the committee together. We had a very interesting clause-by-clause. We talk about some of the stuff that could have been done but we also need to talk about the things that the bill, if passed, will achieve.

I'm going to focus a little bit on the 10-year review of official plans. Being on a municipal council, especially in small-town and rural Ontario, I don't remember, in my 12 years in that position, both on council and as mayor, that we ever really finished a five-year review and signed off before we had to start all over again. It was continuous, onerous and, frankly, expensive, especially for a small community. So the 10-year review period, I think it's—I know that some of the municipal politicians in my riding, and others, really appreciate that change, Speaker.

We talked about other things that should have been in here. I just heard about housing, inclusionary zoning and some of the other things. I think it's very, very important that we focus on what we were trying to do. There is going to be a review of affordable housing. It's ongoing. I think those are the things that we're going to talk about during that piece of legislation in the coming days in this Legislature.

I hope that the members from all sides will endorse Bill 73. Let's get it done and out of the way.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure for me to respond to the member for Oxford's speech. I think he made some exceptional points and, really, it's because of his background as a former municipal politician and also a former chair of ROMA. He knows the municipal file extremely well, and I think he did a great job talking about some of the frustrations that we have in opposition when there are good amendments that get put forward and the government squashes them.

They did learn their lesson today, though, with the municipal land transfer tax. They did listen to the chorus of opposition from a number of mayors. I know we joke on this side about Mayor Steve Clarke in Orillia being one of those voices and having the same name as the member for Leeds—Grenville, but I do express some concern. I read a story in Cambridge that Mayor Craig had mentioned that the government had promised them this, so it's a bit inconsistent with some of the comments that the minister made in this House and also in the scrums.

I guess there's hope. One of the things I want to leave with the members today is the fact that the member for Oxford talked about how you can't have one size that fits all municipalities; you have to be able to be flexible.

I mentioned this morning my concern about the budget last year and the reference in the budget to an eastern Ontario growth plan. I did express my concern to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and also the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. He might be commenting on my comments right now; I hear him talking over there. But there is some concern in eastern Ontario about this growth plan and how it will restrict growth in ridings like mine, that have had very little growth over the last number of years. We need opportunity for growth. We certainly don't need a tax on new home ownership, and I'm glad that the government today abandoned that.

The member for Oxford had some great ideas. Again, I hope that the government listens to him.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this debate on Bill 73.

This morning was a touch-and-go kind of procedure, because it was scheduled for us to talk about this bill this morning, so it's good that we're able to give some feedback on it this afternoon.

There's definitely something that we have concerns about with the bill. There are no inclusionary zoning provisions, despite the government's professing to want to have affordable housing.

The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore's Bill 39—he has brought a bill forward that is a very good bill, so we're looking forward to that debate.

The member from Oxford did talk about a small amendment that was asked for in committee. That's really when the real nitty-gritty details get put in the bill, and there's a lot of good discussion during committee. He talked about wanting to have a definition of "affordable" clarified. Apparently, that was rejected.

I'm not sure what the motive would be for that, because we all talk about affordable housing. The need to have more affordable housing for seniors is one passion I have. They certainly are going to be a growing population. In my riding of London–Fanshawe, there are a lot of seniors who are ready to move out of their homes and downsize, and they're looking for affordable housing. Perhaps if we had the inclusionary zoning when there are apartment buildings being developed, we could have a

percentage of those units for affordable housing. Seniors are on a fixed income, and that would be something that would be good for seniors.

I have to say I'm glad that this bill has come up to the House, because the Ontario Municipal Board needed a review. But there is a lot more that could have been done that wasn't done in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Oxford for final comments.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I want to thank the members from Nickel Belt, Northumberland–Quinte West, Leeds–Grenville and London–Fanshawe for their kind comments.

The parliamentary assistant from Quinte West suggested that the 10-year review was a good idea for the original one, but it wasn't—our amendment would put in the 10-year review for the review of the plan rather than just a new plan. I hope the member understands that most of the municipalities that have a lot of development already have a plan, so they're all going to be reviewed. So we do nothing for them; they're going to have to do it every five years. It takes three years to do it, so it means that we're going to have two years, and then they're going to have to start for the next one, to get it done for the next five years. Having accepted that amendment would have meant that we would have done everything the same. The province says it takes 10 years before we need to do our policy statements. Why would we need to do the official plan more often than reviewing the policy statements?

The other thing is, I just wanted to say that earlier, when I was listening to the member from Nickel Belt debating Bill 115 and coming up with a problem that could have been solved so easily at committee—I was at the committee for Bill 115 when we had that same debate, and it was exactly the same during Bill 73, where we put the cases forward. No one could come up with a good reason why they wouldn't support it. They just wouldn't support it because it wasn't their idea. I think the time will come when they will think that it was a good idea, but it will be too late to change.

But we do want to thank them all for their kind comments. I appreciate the opportunity for us to be able to spend some time with them in the committee.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Since it is almost 6 o'clock, and since we also have night sittings, this House stands recessed until 6:45.

The House recessed from 1759 to 1845.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, William Short

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Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
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Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
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Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
Laurie Scott, Daiene Vernile
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Strengthening Consumer Protection and Electricity System Oversight Act, 2015, Bill 112, Mr. Chiarelli / Loi de 2015 pour renforcer la protection des consommateurs et la surveillance du réseau d'électricité, projet de loi 112, M. Chiarelli

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Strengthening and Improving Government Act, 2015, Bill 85, Mme Meilleur / Loi de 2015 sur le renforcement et l'amélioration de la gestion publique, projet de loi 85, Mme Meilleur

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Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Deborah Deller



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 1 December 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1^{er} décembre 2015

The House recessed from 1759 to 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECTING CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PROPRIÉTAIRES DE CONDOMINIUMS

Mr. Orazietti moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 106, An Act to amend the Condominium Act, 1998, to enact the Condominium Management Services Act, 2015 and to amend other Acts with respect to condominiums / Projet de loi 106, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur les condominiums, édictant la Loi de 2015 sur les services de gestion de condominiums et modifiant d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les condominiums.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Orazietti has moved third reading of Bill 106. Mr. Orazietti.

Hon. David Orazietti: I want to indicate from the start here that I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Newmarket–Aurora, who will speak specifically about some of the amendments that are being proposed.

With that, Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the House today for third reading of Bill 106, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act, 2015.

On May 27 of this year, I rose in the House to introduce legislation to protect and strengthen the rights of Ontario condominium communities. If passed, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act would introduce much-needed measures to significantly strengthen protection for those who buy and live in condos across Ontario. This is a critical step forward to ensure that we are meeting the needs of an ever-growing market.

The existing Condominium Act was passed in 1998, at a time when fewer people lived in condos and when the issues revolving around day-to-day life in condos were far less complex. Today, Ontario has about 700,000 condo units and 10,000 condo corporations, with approximately 1.3 million condo residents in the province, meaning that approximately one in 10 Ontarians lives in a condominium.

While this growth is beneficial to the province, it has also come at a cost. As the number of residents increases,

we have also seen a corresponding increase in the number and complexity of issues related to condominiums. While some of these issues are legal or technical in nature, they also stem from the interpersonal relationship between owners, board members and condo managers. In order to address these issues, the proposed legislation aims not only to strengthen the way condos are managed and governed, but also to provide owners and other stakeholders the tools necessary to build a strong sense of shared responsibility for the well-being of their communities.

The proposed legislation was informed by the input and recommendations we received during the extensive consultations which preceded the drafting of the proposed legislation. I truly believe that, if passed, this act will provide a framework to address the needs of today's condo owners and residents.

The bill embodies the expertise and vision of many within the condominium sector. It underscores our government's commitment to strengthen current and future condominium communities across Ontario.

Over the last few weeks, the bill was discussed by many members here in the Legislature. Members of the committee have been very involved during the hearings, and I'm very appreciative of that. Stakeholders and members of the public were offered an opportunity to present their views and comment on the proposed bill. The committee has heard from a number of interested parties who shared valuable insight and information about this bill and how, if passed, it would better protect condo owners and help to better inform potential condo buyers of their rights and obligations when purchasing a new home.

We also heard how we could make some improvements to the proposed legislation, and we listened. As a result of the valuable feedback at committee, coupled with the feedback from my ministry and from stakeholders and the public over many months, several amendments were made to the bill that would further benefit and strengthen Ontario's condo communities. My colleague and parliamentary assistant in the ministry, Chris Ballard, the MPP for Newmarket–Aurora, will expand on some of the amendments that were made as a result of the feedback received during committee.

1850

If passed, the proposed legislation will provide Ontario with a foundation on which to build robust requirements that will promote stronger condo governance and provide consumer protection mechanisms that will ensure the sustainment of healthy condo communities.

In the end, we want to help condo buyers make informed choices, and, for condo owners, to ensure that their hard-earned investment and the place they call home is well protected. With the proposed changes we are debating today, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act, if passed, will offer much greater protection to Ontario's 1.3 million condo residents.

I am proud of the work we've accomplished to develop this bill, and I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize the work and the consultations that were led by the member who is in fact sitting in front of me: the former Minister of Consumer Services, Minister MacCharles. I want to thank her for that work that was done.

I also want to thank the committee and my parliamentary assistant, as well as staff in my office, for the tremendous amount of work they have done to move this significant piece of legislation forward. It is really the first time in close to 20 years that we're modernizing condominium legislation in the province of Ontario for the benefit of more than a million residents, and we know that this is a growing number.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on the third reading of Bill 106 this evening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the minister. Continuing, I recognize the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today about the importance of Bill 106, the Protecting Condominium Owners Act, 2015.

Condos represent about half of the new homes being built in this province, including those in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora. The sector is worth about \$45 billion and employs more than 300,000 Ontarians.

Condos come in all shapes and sizes, so any effort we take to address laws and practices must be mindful that changes which may work well for one may negatively impact another. We have to find the right balance in order to make sure we're addressing the needs of the greater community. We feel that this bill is the right balance and, if passed, will contribute to the well-being of all condo communities across the province.

As the minister stated, the standing committee made a number of important amendments to improve the bill by providing additional protections for Ontario's condominium communities.

As one example, the committee amended the bill to clarify when and how courts may order the permanent removal of a person from a condominium property in extraordinary circumstances, such as when a person poses a serious risk to the health and safety of other residents.

This amendment would also align the Condominium Act with the Residential Tenancies Act by prohibiting condo corporations and others from using the Condominium Act to terminate a residential tenancy. It would also clarify that unit owner landlords cannot use the Condominium Act to permanently remove their own tenants.

The committee also made a change that would help protect condo owners by prohibiting managers with an interest in the outcome of a meeting from soliciting proxies. This is intended to prevent managers from using proxies to try to influence a vote to their benefit, and to ensure a fair voting process.

The response during committee was significant and demonstrated the high level of passion people have with this bill. I would like to thank the committee and other members who provided their input and suggestions during the process. Not all of the recommendations were included in the current draft of the legislation, but they are still valued. As discussed in committee, many of these recommendations could be addressed in regulations, and we would consider them closely as we move ahead.

Passing this proposed legislation would be a milestone for the condo community. However, passing this legislation is only the first step. If passed, the ministry would continue to work with stakeholders to seek input during the implementation and regulation development stage, before making final policy decisions. The collaborative approach taken to develop this bill has been instrumental to ensure we develop a law that benefits the entire condo community, and we will continue this open-government approach as we move ahead.

Passing the proposed legislation would establish clear, more comprehensive rules to prevent owners from being surprised by unexpected costs after buying a newly built condo; a new condominium authority to provide quicker, lower-cost dispute resolution and help prevent common disputes; strong financial management rules for condo corporations to help prevent financial and organizational mismanagement; better governance requirements for condo boards, including training for condo directors; and mandatory licensing and education requirements for condominium managers.

All of these features, Mr. Speaker, would significantly increase protections for Ontario's condo owners and set a solid foundation for stronger and healthier condo communities across the province. This government has the responsibility to Ontario consumers and their families to ensure that the proper consumer protection mechanisms are in place. The approximately 1.3 million Ontarians who live in condominiums are counting on us. I call on this House to support this bill so Ontario residents can get the protections they want and they deserve.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: It's a privilege to rise in this House, as always, to comment on bills. I know that we sat through committee, and we had the hope of getting through a large number of amendments that we saw were needed for this. All, sadly, were turned down. We had two real gaps in the legislation. The government had to work with us because they were going to create real problems, and we worked with them to modify our amendments so that they fit the need. A lot of consultation was made. We heard through many of the depositions that there were errors made in the legislation.

Hopefully they listened to the delegations. That's not always what we heard.

So I think that we see that it's a good first start. We need to put this legislation in place. It has been since 1998. We just hope that they don't wait another 15 or 20 years for the next—because it is a growing industry that has now taken over. I think that 50% of all new units built in this province are condominiums, so it's a big sector, with a lot of changes. Of course, as the market changes, we need to sit back, evaluate what's going on in the industry and make the changes necessary to give the owners the confidence that it's a great place to live, that you can protect your investment, and in the end, if your decision is to hold onto it, that you can pass it off and have some value left.

I look forward to speaking later on in the night on the legislation and to see what else the government has to say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments? Further questions and comments? I feel like an auctioneer. Further questions and comments?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please. Order. Back to the minister for final comments.

Hon. David Orazietti: Thank you, Speaker, for the opportunity. I appreciate all the comments that have been made in regard to Bill 106 and look forward to speedy passage.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I know the good news, Speaker, is that I could speak for hours tonight. I know the members are looking forward to that. I'm pleased to rise today for my comments on third reading of Bill 106.

1900

Condominiums are a growing sector in Ontario. Today, over 700,000 households call a condominium unit their home, everything from 50-storey glass towers to older conversion projects. The incredible construction activity driven by the condominium industry is clearly visible from the windows of Queen's Park.

There are benefits to developing and living in a condominium, especially a multi-unit one. It is a great option for families or seniors who wish to downsize from a larger property. It is an affordable way for young families to step onto the property ladder, compared to a semi-detached or a detached home.

High-density condominium living close to the downtown core is a positive influence on the environment, as it brings workers closer to their jobs and the amenities that the city offers, reducing the need to commute.

Furthermore, a condominium's ability to draw upon the shared resources of several owners allows the corporation to achieve economies of scale when purchasing equipment and services.

The major distinguishing feature between a condominium property and the more traditional notion of a family home is that ownership does not extend to the full range

of amenities and services that you would control in a detached house.

Interjection.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Oh. I just wanted to say that I'm sharing my time with the member from Leeds—Grenville.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: And?

Mr. Jim McDonell: And Nepean—Carleton.

Services and charges such as hydro, air conditioning, heating and common elements maintenance and repairs are usually shared amongst the owners, whose stake in the well-being of the condominium is as significant as your own. This is why, in Ontario and other provinces, the owners form part of the corporation, where they are all shareholders. The responsibility for maintaining the building's value and attractiveness to purchasers, as well as preserving residents' quality of life, falls upon the corporation and the elected board of directors. Here is where the issue of consumer protection comes from.

Unless we delve deeply into the philosophy of property, we generally see property as ownership of an undivided interest for us to dispose of as we please. But that is not how a condominium works. The word itself means "common property," and where there is a common interest, there's the need for management, decisions and compromise.

The last update to the Condominium Act happened in 1998, and since then the condominium sector has boomed. This allowed more Ontarians to buy their first home, but it also triggered the need for changes in the legislation.

The bill before us is the result of a long consultation process, initiated by the Ministry of Consumer Services, that involved many stakeholders, such as owners, managers, consumer advocates and legal experts. It is our duty in this Legislature to ensure that all Ontarians can make informed choices when buying a condominium, enjoying their property and having their investment protected from harm.

Condominium owners and corporations have only one dispute resolution avenue available to them today, and that is the courts. Simple disagreements regarding matters such as common expenses or excessive noise are taking up valuable court resources and time, whereas other contracts such as tenancies already enjoy a custom tribunal where the claim can be adjudicated by experts. This is the framework from which the government's condominium tribunal stems.

On the surface, the new tribunal is designed to reduce the cost and duration of condominium disputes by removing them from the courts. Indeed, the sections establishing the tribunal explicitly state that certain categories of disputes can't be referred to the courts if the tribunal exists. This arrangement is similar to the framework around tenancies, whereby a tenant's rights and obligations can't be limited, terminated or enforced without an order of the Landlord and Tenant Board. The tribunal and the Landlord and Tenant Board, however, are two very different creatures, which is cause for concern.

The tribunal the government is establishing with the legislation is appointed by the condo authority, a body

whose composition we do not know yet. Bill 106 leaves it to the minister to determine how the board is appointed, and limits the minister to appointing less than half of the authority, while the majority will be appointed or elected in accordance with the as-yet-unseen regulations.

In contrast to the Landlord and Tenant Board and all other administrative tribunals in Ontario, the condominium tribunal will be appointed without legislative oversight by an authority beyond public control. The condominium tribunal will have broad adjudicative powers. The members of this Legislature can't as much as ask whether the appointees to the tribunal have taken an adjudication course or a single law class. We proposed amendments to balance this situation and bring the tribunal in line with other similar bodies in Ontario. The government side rejected all of them, citing "consolidation risk" and the fact that this isn't how the Ministry of Consumer Services is used to appointing people. I'm sorry; that just doesn't wash. This is no reason for someone adjudicating a \$1,000 repair dispute for a condo owner to be appointed any less transparently or accountably as the adjudicator for a \$1,000 dispute in a rent case.

It would be remiss of me to fail to mention that co-operation between the government and the opposition occurred on three amendments. The government reached out to us regarding two clear stakeholder requests for which we had submitted amendments.

One request was by the Association of Condominium Managers of Ontario, which highlighted that, as currently written, the legislation would make it very difficult for a dismissed manager to complete the necessary regulatory and financial filings arising from the original management contract. Requiring that the manager surrender all documents to the corporation immediately upon termination is a fair demand. However, allowing said manager to keep certain copies, for a specified time, for certain prescribed purposes is a fair balance.

The next amendment we worked on together concerned proxy voting at owners' meetings. Under the current system, proxies are not tightly regulated and are prone to abuse. We heard stakeholders' concerns regarding the solicitation of proxies by the board and the condo manager, and the potential opportunities for tampering and placing undue pressure on an owner to proxy someone else.

Our original amendments sought to make it clear that board members, board candidates, condo managers and their families would not be allowed to be proxies. The managers would be banned from handling proxies in any way, including soliciting, reviewing or storing them. The government rejected the first amendment, which we found disappointing. On the second amendment, however, the government agreed to a compromise: Managers would be explicitly barred from soliciting proxies from owners. Having witnessed the amendment bloodbath which preceded this agreement, we followed the principle that some consumer protection is better than none at all.

Banning solicitation is the first step. However, we would prefer it if condominium managers were removed even further from the proxy process, in order to maintain

the confidence of the owners and avoid conflicts of interest.

Overall, the legislation is a needed reform for the sector, which has experienced strong growth in recent years and is a key driver of this economy. It is the result of lengthy consultations that involved citizens, associations and corporations. We would have preferred that the government listened to the deputations we heard at committee and allowed us to improve the protection of condominium owners, their assets and their equality of life.

As it stands, the bill could have been so much better. I think consumers should give it a C+.

Let's not wait another 17 years for the next review.

I'll be sharing it off with our next—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you very much. Continuing debate, I recognize the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thanks, Speaker. I'm only going to take a few moments because I think my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry has already talked about a number of issues.

I want to talk about an issue brought to my attention by a condo owner in Leeds–Grenville as really a cautionary tale, because the government proudly boasts that Bill 106 extends Tarion warranty coverage to condo conversion projects. Again, it's a welcome measure, but I do want to talk about a cautionary tale in the riding. It's a terrible experience and it's another example of why the promise of Tarion protection sometimes isn't worth the paper it's printed on.

Earlier this year, I was contacted by a constituent on behalf of a condominium board in my riding. They wanted me to know about what they had been through since purchasing their condo units with what they thought was the safety net of Tarion. Here's part of what they told me: "In year 1, the original list of deficiencies totalled 176. This list was prepared by a consulting engineer who did a complete building audit and reported the deficiencies to Tarion."

1910

The condo board went out and hired an engineer who identified nearly 200 deficiencies and reported them to Tarion. Now, you'd think that with an expert on their side, it would be good news for these folks. Well, Speaker, you know what? You'd be wrong. Tarion would agree that only three of those 176 deficiencies were warrantied.

Even then, the board had to fight to get Tarion to cover them. As they wrote to me, "Convincing Tarion of our claim came with significant cost attached. One warranty claim that was accepted by Tarion cost us \$17,000 in consulting and legal fees to prove our case.

"As of the end of this summer, the owners will have spent approximately \$1 million fixing an array of major building deficiencies not covered by Tarion." In addition to what they've paid for their condos, they've paid about \$36,000 each to fix problems not covered by Tarion.

I wrote to Minister Oraziotti, who spoke earlier this evening. I wrote to him in August to outline the nightmare they've been through and to implore him to use their experience as motivation to make some substantive

reforms to Tarion. To say the minister's response was a disappointment would be a severe understatement. The response was described by my constituent as having "lots of sympathy but very light on solutions."

But it was quite interesting that the minister's response actually cited the private member's bill introduced by the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton as an example of things being done at Queen's Park. Of course, the minister didn't say that he was adopting Bill 60 in government legislation, so it was a bit of a red herring for the minister even to bring it up in the letter.

That's why I wanted to put it on the agenda as I stood in support of Bill 106. I want to remind the minister the consumer protections he talks about in the bill are just empty words until he gets moving on the reforms to Tarion. I want to put that on the record, and I want to defer now to the member for Nepean–Carleton.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Continuing debate, I recognize the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to have the opportunity and the floor to discuss Bill 106 and indicate our party's support for this legislation. We believe that it is time to renew the legislation in order to update the situation that we have in Ontario.

The most recent condo legislation in our province was last updated in 1998, and today, many more people live in condominiums than lived in condominiums previously. In fact, 1.3 million Ontarians live in condominiums, and many of them live in condos inside the city of Ottawa, which is where I live, which I represent and who I advocate for on the floor of this assembly.

More than 50% of the new homes built in Ontario are condominiums, including in my constituency of Nepean–Carleton. In fact, last week, I was with the member for Leeds–Grenville in a community that I represent called Barrhaven. It's one of the fastest-growing communities in all of Ontario. That high growth means not only a very high birth rate and an aging population, but it also means many homeowners are coming to our community for affordable housing, in order to have a family home. As a result, we're seeing a lot of single-family dwellings, but we're also seeing an increase in condominiums.

When we were talking last week about the municipal land transfer tax and our opposition as Progressive Conservatives against it—with two notable organizations in the city of Ottawa, the Ottawa real estate association as well as the Greater Ottawa Home Builders' Association—it was interesting when a question came up with respect to condominiums and the fact that as a result of what was at the time proposed and now debunked, the municipal land transfer tax, this would impact the condominium market as well, which we know has been struggling because so many condominiums are out there.

Recently, the numbers suggest that there are about 700,000 condominium units in Ontario, with another 51,000 under construction. Put that into perspective: That's almost 300,000 more condos in the province of Ontario today than existed in 2001, three years after the last bill was introduced.

It has been a long time coming. Many of the stakeholders who want changes and want more stability and to have a greater say for their condominium boards have been here since 2012. That means that for almost four years they have been advocating to this government in order to have changes made.

I want to acknowledge—and I would be remiss if I did not—the hard work of Rosario Marchese, a former New Democrat member of this assembly, someone I was a good friend to, and he was a good friend to me, who I travelled with on a delegation to Taiwan, and who I have a lot of respect for. He fought tirelessly for this legislation. When this bill ultimately passes, which I suspect it will, given that the government is supporting it, as are we in the Progressive Conservative opposition, I think it's important that we acknowledge the hard work of former members.

I'm not going to take much more time other than to acknowledge the hard work of my critic, from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Jim McDonell.

I want to take this time just to say thank you to all of the members who have participated in this. The stakeholders who have been championing this for the last four years are going to be very pleased at Christmastime when this bill is finally dealt with. I think that that's really incredible.

We have a few more pieces of legislation—and this may be a bit off-topic, but I think colleagues will indulge me—that we'll be dealing with in the next week and a half, before we all head off to the Christmas break. I know that I'll have an opportunity next Thursday to speak to my bill, Rowan's Law, which I hope all members will support. Of course, I want to say thank you to the members from Kitchener–Waterloo and Ottawa South for co-sponsoring it.

In terms of debate, I notice there are a lot of happy colleagues right now, as we get ready for Christmas and go back to our constituencies and our families. I know that the next week is going to be very exciting as we get through that. I would really like to wish all my colleagues well. I know we're here, sitting in a very rare evening session—

Hon. Michael Coteau: Sing the Michael Coteau song for us.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, I just want it into the record that the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport wants me to sing a song about him. Now, I'm not a great singer, and I'm not going to do that while the microphone is on.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would just like to remind the member from Nepean–Carleton—we're addressing the bill, so please address the bill. Thank you very much.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you, Speaker.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: If you sing, sing to the Chair.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, on that final note, although I am giving support to the Liberals on this key initiative, and although I'm working with them on Rowan's Law, I must say that the song I think of when I

think of the Liberal caucus is not the Michael Coteau song. It in fact is actually If I Had a Billion Dollars—to pay off all of their scandals, including the gas plants.

Speaker, in the spirit—

Mr. John Yakabuski: A billion is not enough.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: A billion is not enough.

In the spirit of the season, I wish all members a happy December 1—

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: They're singing to me now, Speaker. This is awkward. I think I'll conclude my comments on Bill 106 before they go any further. Thank you.

Mr. Steve Clark: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order: I recognize the member from Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: A point of order, Speaker: I want to correct my record. In my speech this evening, I forgot to wish my wife, Deanna Clark, a happy birthday today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That is not a point of order. However, I will allow it to happen.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): An additional point of order, from the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm going to call the member opposite out, because I actually just tweeted his wife's birthday, and I think he saw it on Twitter.

Mr. Steve Clark: I know. That's why I'm doing it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That again is not a point of order, but I will allow it to happen.

Further questions and comments? I recognize the member—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? One more time: questions and comments?

Back to the member for final comments.

Interjection: Further debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Well, then, I guess we'll have to go to further debate. Who's on first? I recognize the member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

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Ms. Catherine Fife: I think that this is why we don't have night sittings anymore, Mr. Speaker. I don't know.

This is an important act—it is, though—Bill 106, and the Minister of Government and Consumer Services actually referenced earlier that one out of every 10 Ontarians lives in a condo. He referenced that 1.3 million residents live in condos in the province of Ontario, so we need to go through the due process, I think.

I must confess, though, Mr. Speaker, I am really missing Rosario Marchese tonight, because he would be in his element in this environment. For those of you who never got to work with him in this House, he championed the causes that are contained within this bill, with the exception of Tarion. With the lack of movement on Tarion, I think he would have had lots to say. I'm going to actually try to channel a little bit of him, but not too much, because we have to be respectful.

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: The minister of curmudgeonry right there is heckling me, right from the very get-go.

We do agree; we agree that municipal building inspection issues are out of the scope in relation to Bill 106. This is why it's so very important: We respectfully submit that the matter of Tarion's responsibility in relation to the Ontario building code and inspections during construction—these are two key, related issues.

I'm going to reflect some of what the stakeholders who came to finance committee said. As the finance critic, I sat on this committee and listened throughout the day to the concerns. Those concerns are going to come to this floor whether you like it or not.

As noted on page 3 of the CPBH submission to the committee regarding Bill 106, the act says that homes must be constructed in accordance with the Ontario building code. But Tarion has developed its own regulation that can unreasonably limit time frames for claims even for Ontario building code violations. It's unbelievable.

During the committee, it was really interesting. One of the delegations came before the committee and said, "Oh, no. Tarion's doing a good job." I asked him, "How do you know? You don't have any access to their records. There's no transparency with regard to this agency. You have no way to measure checks and balances as they relate to this agency, so how do you know?" And actually, his time ran out, which I think was really quite fortunate for him.

Section 18(1) of the ONHWP Act says that Tarion shall appoint inspectors. Section 18(2) of the ONHWP Act gives Tarion the authority to inspect during construction. This is an important piece of the legislation, obviously missing from this. But Tarion has taken the position that inspecting during construction is the job of the municipality and does not exercise its power under the act, even when there are many serious reports of shoddy construction, such as noted in a recent Financial Post article included in submissions to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. We believe that Tarion should not have the right to ignore its power under the act to inspect during construction, particularly when there is such strong evidence of shoddy construction and a lack of enforcement of the Ontario building code.

When repeatedly asked how many inspectors it has, Tarion vice-president Siloni Waraich finally responded as follows—and this is worth noting: "To answer your questions about numbers"—this was from 2010 to 2015—"Tarion has had three appointed inspectors, to be called upon to conduct inspections for the purposes enumerated above"—licensing matters, warranty backstops—"but have not had to exercise the statutory right given them to enter without a warrant..." So just to be clear, for the entire province of Ontario, Tarion says it had three inspectors for a five-year period, but they did no inspections.

This is concerning, Mr. Speaker. Here we are in third reading. The government is clearly going to move forward with this piece of legislation, but it is our responsibility as New Democrats to put this on the record.

There are also questions about whether the three inspectors had adequate qualifications to actually be called inspectors, as per section 18(1) of the act. If these three people did not inspect during these five years—

Mr. Chris Ballard: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order: I recognize the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think you'll find that standing order 23(b)(i) says that the speaker has to speak to the bill. In fact, the speaker is not speaking to the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I've been listening carefully, and I would have to say that she is.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Also, at this point in time, I would ask the member from Etobicoke North to withdraw.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm going to be very clear here—I wasn't going to speak for very long, but now I may just have to speak a little bit longer. Bill 106 is missing an opportunity to address some very key issues as they relate to the construction industry and the condo industry.

This is what we heard from stakeholders; this is what we heard from condo owners. They were concerned about the quality of the condos that actually were built, because Tarion, which does have an overarching responsibility to ensure that the same contractors are not employed, and that the same government contracts do not go to those contractors—Tarion actually has that oversight ability—has been an unbelievable failure in this regard.

Tarion has the responsibility to play a critical role in both new home construction, as the regulator of the industry, and in providing warranty services. Tarion is supposed to be a critical part of Ontario's consumer protection, but many agree that the consumer protection Tarion provides is woefully inadequate. This is what we heard at the committee on Bill 106. The related legislation is almost 40 years old, and Tarion is charged with the administration of that legislation. Housing construction has changed considerably in the last 40 years.

So here we are, debating a piece of legislation. Once again, this government comes forward with some good things in Bill 106, but what a missed opportunity to actually address one of the core, fundamental issues facing this province.

I was actually one of those condo owners over on Bay Street, when the glass was falling off, and I had no rights whatsoever—no rights. That's what condo owners said to us during the finance committee. They said, "Listen, what recourse do we have?"

The best money that can be spent is an ounce of prevention. So why not give Tarion the ability—they actually have the ability; why not ask them to do their job to protect the consumers and the condo owners in the province of Ontario? The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton has brought forward a private member's bill that

would actually address this. The former member from Trinity–Spadina has been fighting this fight for a long time. Then you have a piece of legislation that misses the mark once again.

That's really the most confusing part about this government, I have to say. You have the ability to bring forward a fully developed piece of legislation. You have the ability to actually make a huge difference in the lives of people—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: There's a Tarion review going on.

Ms. Catherine Fife:—like the review, like the municipal land transfer tax review. That was ongoing, and then you just made an announcement today in the House—unprecedented. To a question—a gift of a question—you come out with a policy right there.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Government governing. What's wrong with that?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, but you were a different government when there was a minority. It was more respectful, there was inclusion and you had that promise—do you remember the promise of the activist centre? I'm not going to give up on that activist centre, Mr. Speaker. You remember that, Mr. Speaker, right? Evidence over partisanship and consultation over massive non-consultation; just do whatever you want to do. Do you remember that, Mr. Speaker?

The minority government: Those were the good old days, because the voices of the people of this province were actually reflected here.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: You gave us the majority.

Ms. Catherine Fife: You actually should thank Mr. Tim Hudak, and we all know that for a fact.

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There are serious problems with both the legislation itself and how Tarion is actually administering the legislation.

Just for a little bit of history, the problems on both fronts quickly emerged. In 1986, the office of the Ombudsman of Ontario was convinced of the need for more accountability and oversight. In 1986, I was in grade 11. That's how long the Ombudsman has wanted oversight over Tarion. Yet here we have Bill 106, in November 2015, and serious reform is not part of it. Since 1986, the Ombudsman of Ontario has been calling for jurisdiction over Tarion, in large part due to the problems in Ontario with Tarion.

Tarion has been so bad for the province of Ontario that a non-profit, volunteer-run consumer advocacy organization, Canadians for Properly Built Homes, was founded in 2004. Congratulations. Things had gotten so bad with Tarion that they inspired a whole new level of civic engagement, and Canadians for Properly Built Homes was founded. It has been very active from the outset in trying to make Tarion much more transparent and accountable to Ontario homeowners, and this work continues today.

Hundreds of thousands of Ontario families have reported dissatisfaction with Tarion. Using Tarion's own annual client survey data, approximately 60,000 families have complained with Tarion—60,000.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Saint Rosario.

Ms. Catherine Fife: God bless; that's what I say to the member opposite.

The media, to their credit, has been very consistent on this issue, but it's almost like Groundhog Day on the issue of consumer rights for condo owners. Everyone—the CBC, the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Sun, W5, Toronto Star, Hamilton Spectator—the serious problems with shoddy construction and the lack of consumer protection in Ontario has resulted in some journalists taking the position that this is no longer news, because this government stopped listening a long time ago. You have to remember that this has been going on since 1986.

In July 2012—and this is really key—the Toronto Star investigation reported that Tarion was keeping secret records on builders' performance. That's as recent as 2012. A few days later, the Toronto Star reported that the then consumer services minister, who is here today, said that she would work with Tarion on this. However, consumers continue to report that their builders' records on the website—this is three years later—are still inaccurate and incomplete.

So the problem continues, and the problem is to the point that Bill 106 does not address some of those core issues; it really does not.

Last summer, a Maclean's article said that industry experts refer to regulation in Ontario as the Wild West. Bill 106 doesn't fix the Wild West.

A recent Globe and Mail article reported that insurers are increasingly turning away from the condo market due to shoddy construction. Again, Tarion is the regulator. Consumers in the province of Ontario are getting to a point where they can't even get insurance for these condos.

A recent example of a highly questionable Tarion activity: Tarion announced a corporate social responsibility plan. This is where they are. There's no responsibility from the government. There's no directive from the government. There is no piece of legislation which actually provides the oversight from the government on Tarion.

Meanwhile, Tarion is denying homeowner claims by superseding a clause in the act regarding compliance with the Ontario building code with a regulation it has set for itself, with very limited time frames for claims.

This is like the fox watching the henhouse, and this is becoming a trend. Tarion is also falling behind other provincial warranty programs regarding time limits for claims. For example, both Alberta and BC have warranty coverage for a 10-year period, while Ontario only offers a warranty for seven years. Alberta new home warranty providers have five-year building envelope protection, while in Ontario it's only two years.

So the other provinces are leading. Other provinces are putting consumers first. They're working with the industry. They're making substantive change as it relates to acts like this.

Once again, we have a government that can move lightning-fast on the sale of Hydro One, for instance.

Like, 1986: That's when the Ontario Ombudsman asked for oversight over Tarion. The knuckles are dragging along the ground here. We need to make sure that consumers, condo owners, those 1.3 million residents in the province of Ontario, are protected. We need to make sure that the one out of every 10 Ontarians who actually is considering buying a condo or is a condo owner has some recourse. Why this government stands behind Tarion year after year, since 1986—it doesn't make any sense whatsoever.

I know that it must be frustrating for some of them who do have condo owners in their ridings who have legitimate claims and who have seen serious injustice. What one condo owner said at finance committee was, "You fail to understand that this is my home. I can't choose who these other people are in my life. But this is my home, and I should have rights." The province and the government of Ontario should protect that homeowner. They missed the mark once again with Bill 106, but at least our former member Rosario Marchese pushed them to get something done on consumer protection and condo protection—missing the boat once again on Tarion.

I'd like to say it's been a pleasure—but it's always a privilege to stand up. Take care.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments? Questions and comments?

Further debate?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): You're not in your seat.

Further debate?

Mr. Oraziotti has moved third reading of Bill 106, An Act to amend the Condominium Act, 1998, to enact the Condominium Management Services Act, 2015 and to amend other Acts with respect to condominiums.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute—saved by the bell. I have received a vote deferral to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly: pursuant to standing order 28(h), a request that the vote on third reading of Bill 106 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, December 2, 2015.

Third reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Orders of the day?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move adjournment of the House.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

The deputy government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House?

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1940.

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Wednesday 2 December 2015

Mercredi 2 décembre 2015



Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 2 December 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 2 décembre 2015

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HEALTH INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LA SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on November 19, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004 / *Projet de loi 119, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements personnels sur la santé, à apporter certaines modifications connexes et à abroger et à remplacer la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements sur la qualité des soins.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When we last had this bill, the member from Nickel Belt had the floor.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Speaker. As you remember, I was interrupted in mid-flight explaining what Bill 119 was all about. I will do a quick recap and then carry on.

Basically, Bill 119 has three main parts to it. The first part of the bill has to do with protecting a patient's private information. I will explain why this is very important. The second part of the bill has to do with electronic health records: How we make sure that we have strong regulations in place for the use of electronic health records, because our personal information is on those records. The third part has to do with accountability and transparency when medical errors occur.

I said it before, but it's worth repeating: In order for care to take place, there has to be a trusting relationship between the care provider and the person who receives that care. There has to be a really good human relationship between those people; otherwise, quality care cannot take place.

We are all human beings, and when we are sick, sometimes the treatment plan and the care that you have to go through is really not obvious and comes with substantive

side effects. You really have to be able to trust your care provider that this is the best course of action for you; otherwise, it is not obvious that this is the path to health.

I repeat this, and I have repeated it in this House many times, because this is at the core of our health care system. At the core of it is this trusting relationship. With a trust account, you have to make many, many deposits into a trust account, but you will only make one withdrawal. If you lose that trust in your provider, in the agency, in the hospital or in the system as a whole, then nothing else matters, and there will never be quality care taking place for that person.

So how do we ensure that this trust is always there? The role of government, as the steward of our health care system, is really to put methods, frameworks, laws and regulations in place to protect that trust. How do we do this as legislators? We make sure that all of the agencies that provide care have oversight. We make sure that the agencies do their work in a way that is transparent, so we put regulations in place that allow transparency. We do this in making every single care provider—care agency, hospital, CCAC, LHIN, mental health agency, primary care agency—accountable. We make sure that they have to stand and account for what they have done. This is how, at a system level, you work toward that trust—that trust that is at the core of our health care system.

Everybody knows that when you go see a care provider, whether it be a midwife, a nurse practitioner, a physician, a dentist, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, a social worker or a dietitian—it doesn't matter who it is—they will ask you questions. They will ask you very personal questions. They'll ask you questions about yourself, about your age, your date of birth. They'll ask you questions about your health. They'll ask you questions about your state of health at that particular time, if you have had any surgery before, what kind of medications you take. They will ask you questions about your personal choices in life: Are you a smoker? Are you a drinker? Do you use recreational drugs? They'll ask you very, very personal questions and they will write this down in a record so that they and other members of your team get to know you better and can put forward a treatment plan that will help you stay as healthy as possible or help you cope with a disease if you are facing a disease at the time.

You can see how you have consented to share this collection of personal information with your care provider, but you certainly did not consent to share that information with the world. That very personal information, in this particular setting, you were comfortable with shar-

ing, but in many other settings, this is your privacy and you are allowed to keep information about you private. This is what privacy is all about. This is why it is so important to set the right laws and regulations to protect all of that.

I'm at the 40,000-foot level. I will go down and dig more into the bill, but I just wanted to set the tone. Right now, we have seen a huge push by the government to—basically, programs and services that used to be in our hospitals. Our hospitals have layers of oversight. They have layers of transparency and accountability, because remember, this is how you ensure trust. Well, a lot of the programs that used to be provided in our hospitals have now been privatized into the community. Hospitals have had tight budgets, flat-line budgets, for the last four years. They are being told by the government that if it is not acute hospital care, it is okay to stop doing it and somebody in the community will go on with it.

The problem is that those out-of-hospital clinics have no accountability, they have no transparency and they have no oversight. Remember, those are the three pillars as to how the government mandates, as the steward of the system, to ensure this trust. This is how, at the system level, we make sure that the trust is there. Well, I'm telling you right now that at the 40,000-foot level, there is a major gap in this bill.

It is all fine and good that we are putting transparency, oversight and accountability measures in place to protect people's privacy, to make sure that those protections extend to electronic health records and to make sure that if you are done wrong, you gain access. But as more and more procedures and services that used to be done in our hospitals are now done in those out-of-hospital clinics, none of what we're talking about applies to them. This has to be corrected. You can expect the NDP to bring amendments forward to make sure that the out-of-hospital clinics will be covered by those new and amended pieces of legislation that we are putting forward.

0910

Let me tell you, Speaker, that it was a shock to me that during estimates—I sat in for the estimates for the Ministry of Health. We had a deputation from Cancer Care Ontario, an agency that I have nothing but respect for, a very top-notch agency. They are the ones who told us that 50% of the colonoscopies that are done for the program aimed at detecting colon cancer early are done in out-of-hospital clinics. Later on, I will go into more detail as to some serious breaches that have happened, specifically in out-of-hospital clinics that do those colonoscopies. Cancer Care Ontario is working really hard so that this never happens again, so that the trust is maintained in these very important programs that they do, but they're asking for help. We have to do our part. We have to make sure that we include those out-of-hospital clinics in the bill that we are talking about, Bill 119, the Health Information Protection Act. Right now, they are not.

You also have to look a bit at the broader context. I've talked about hospitals having a flatlined budget for the last four years. All of them are expecting a fifth year.

They have managed expectations very well. Most hospitals expect a fifth year of flatlined budgets—that is, no new money coming in, but the expenses continue to increase.

Already, after four years of flatlining, we have seen a lot—we have heard about a lot of layoffs. Right now, there are 625 registered nurses' positions that have been eliminated since January 1 of this year. That's 84 jobs at the hospitals in Belleville, Trenton and Prince Edward county. That's 150 jobs in North Bay—and the MPP from North Bay has brought those forward, as have the NDP—and 21 layoffs at the Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences in Whitby.

We also see that whenever the Minister of Health delivers what I would call a "read speech"—if he reads a speech for any group—the word "transformation" comes non-stop.

When you listen to Ed Clark, the guy who told us that privatizing Hydro One was a good idea—he turned his sights away from hydro and booze for a while and started to look at health care, and what are the words coming out of his mouth? Greater private sector involvement in the health care system.

Of all the provinces in Canada, we are the province that has the most private sector involvement in long-term care. More than 60% of all the beds in Ontario are private beds; that is, they are operated by private operators. We're talking over 65,000 beds.

When we look at home care, our home care system is completely dominated by the for-profit sector. If you look at all of the contracts and all of the money—and our Auditor General did a very good overview as to how the money is spent in our home care system—we are the most heavily privatized of all, bar none. The next province doesn't even register, compared to how privatized our home care system has been.

I would venture to say that those two areas of our health care system are the two weakest ones right now. Our home care system fails more people than it helps. Our long-term-care system is so plagued with patient-on-patient violence that the Office of the Chief Coroner wants to do a review of homicide in our long-term-care system, because year after year, the number of murders within our long-term-care system doubles. We used to have only two, then it became three, then it became five, and last year it became eight. Those are just the murders that have been reported. If there was any other town of about 75,000 people where there had been eight murders in the previous year, the resources would be pouring in to help that community, to make sure that we have grass-roots support in place so this kind of violence never happens again. But this is happening right here, right now. This is happening in our long-term-care homes, and it doesn't trigger any action and it doesn't trigger any influx of resources. Those people are cast aside, I'm guessing, because of stigma, because they're old, and this is wrong.

I'm bringing this forward because I wanted to set a bit of the context as we bring in this new bill, the Health

Information Protection Act. It doesn't come out of thin air. It comes with a transformation in our health care system that has seen massive privatization of big areas of health care. Those massive privatizations have been accompanied by very poor outcomes, by very poor quality of care, where more people are failed by our home care system than are helped. So I wanted to set the tone.

Of course, as I said, the bill has three parts. The first part has to do with personal health information and protection. In my neck of the woods, we call this PHIPA, the Personal Health Information Protection Act. What does it do? It basically sets rules as to how we collect, use and disclose personal information. I told you at the beginning of my speech that people voluntarily give a lot of personal information to health care providers. The bill will set out how we collect this, how we use it and how we disclose it.

Personal information could be from your mental health, your physical health, your family health history, your care providers, your plan of care, your drugs—you get the picture. So why do we need this? We need this because that information has been looked at by people who should never have. Don't get me wrong. I'm not a big fan of Rob Ford, never have been and probably never will be. But while he was undergoing chemotherapy for his cancer, hundreds of people accessed his records. Those people had no right to access his records, but yet, not a single one of them has been prosecuted or held to account because our laws are too weak. Bill 119 would hopefully allow us to do that.

Other high-profile cases: A man I do love and have loved and respected all my life was Jack Layton. When Jack was sick and undergoing treatment, the same thing happened. Hundreds of people accessed his medical records. Those people had no business accessing his medical records. Those people were not part of his circle of care. Those people broke the sacred trust that allows us to have a good health care system. And yet, nothing was done.

The last cases that have gone through court were actually dismissed because of the length of time it has taken. Those are high profile, but there are many, many what I would call people like you and I, many, many Ontarians who have also had their records looked at that shouldn't have. In 2011, test records for 12,000 Ontarians who were screened for colon cancer were lost in the mail. Lost in the mail, Speaker: We don't know who got those letters. The privacy commissioner at the time said, "I am astounded that such a loss could take place." So am I. That's 12,000 people for whom the trust in the colon cancer check has been broken. You know how hard it will be to re-motivate those people to go for their colon check next time? It will be next to impossible. That means an opportunity to catch colon cancer early will be lost.

0920

In 2013, a secure USB data key was lost at Montfort Hospital containing information on 25,000 people. The personal information of 25,000 Ontarians was lost because a USB key was lost.

In 2013, a memory card containing the names, addresses, and birth and marital status of 18,000 people was

stolen from a Peel region employee's car. The information belonged to people who were part of the Peel Public Health Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program. Again, the privacy commissioner said, "I call on all Ontario health care organizations to review their practices immediately."

Go on to 2013: Data storage sticks went missing containing medical information on 18,000 patients at Toronto Western Hospital's eye clinic. This prompted an apology from the chief doctor and, again, an investigation by the privacy commissioner.

Again in 2013: A private clinic in Toronto, which charges \$2,595 for every health assessment they do, actually sold their list of 7,700 clients and patients.

In 2014, personal information of 8,300 patients at Scarborough's Rouge Valley Centenary hospital was leaked by a hospital employee who was being paid by an outside company to leak that information. That employee actually went into patients' records.

Ms. Soo Wong: She was convicted.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Yes, this one was convicted, as the member has said.

In 2014, a Sarnia woman was contacted by a private cosmetic surgery clinic after she had already booked that surgery at a public hospital. She was quite puzzled as to how that private cosmetic surgery clinic could have known that she had been wanting cosmetic surgery. Obviously, information was leaked.

I share this information, Speaker, to really give the scope of the problem. This is a problem that the government has known about for a long time. This is a problem that has hit the front page of the papers on numerous occasions, with always the same reaction: How could that be? And why is it that so few of the people who commit those breaches are ever held to account?

Well, in part, because the laws that we have in place are too cumbersome, too weak, and they need to be tightened. This is in part what this will do. It will do things like mandate a notification to the privacy commissioner. Right now, oftentimes the privacy commissioner finds out about such a breach by reading the paper or by seeing it online or by seeing it on the television. Now, the people who have made a breach will have to notify.

Everybody who holds information—they are called health information custodians—all of the custodians, the people who own the data, who own the computers where that information is stored, will be held responsible for improper use and they will have to inform the professional college if the person who is implicated in the breach of privacy holds a licence. There are 27 regulated health professions in Ontario: think physio, OT, physicians, nurses, midwives, pharmacists. All of those people—27 different professionals—hold licences. So if you hold a licence, your college will know about it.

Then again, although the bill aims to go in the right direction, it has some serious flaws. One of them is that the reporting relationships are not the same if you keep that information in an electronic format or if you keep that information on the old paper chart that used to be.

Don't get me wrong, Speaker: There are still plenty of paper charts throughout our health care system. Why is that? Why is it that you have a reporting relationship to the privacy commissioner and to the college if there is a breach on an electronic format, but you don't have the same reporting relationship if there's a breach on a paper format? That makes no sense. It has to be better harmonized. A breach is a breach. It doesn't matter if you read a paper record or if you read it on your computer screen; you still did something that was wrong. It should be reported to your college and it should be reported to the privacy commissioner so that we have an investigation.

There are a number of clarifications that need to be made about how this will really work in a clinical setting. That brings me to the electronic health record. Some people, throughout history, are willing to share information with one particular care provider but not with the entire team. I will take an example that happened very often in primary care. In primary care, you may feel comfortable telling your nurse practitioner that you are a recreational marijuana user—because you're starting to have lung problems or because you have stress and you use it for whatever reason. But you don't want everybody within the care team to know about this because, let's face it, it is still illegal. You basically told your nurse practitioner that you are doing an illegal act, but you have shared that information because that information is relevant to the care that he or she will provide to you.

In the old days, when somebody shared something like this that was illegal, you would show them—you have to keep a note. You would put the note into a brown envelope, seal it, sign across the seal and the patient would sign across the seal. Everybody was very comfortable, because here it was: You knew that it had been written down, but you had seen the piece of paper go into the envelope, being sealed, and you had your signature on it. You knew that if somebody opened it, it would be pretty easy to see.

The same type of consent has to take place in the electronic format. That is, you may want part of your record—the drugs that you're on and the surgeries that you've had—to be available to all, but you may not want part of your mental health history to be available to all. So the same thing that we used to do with the envelope and the signature across, this choice that you have to consent to part of your record being shared within your care team—not with the world, just with your care team—is still available to you.

The other part that is still available to you is that you can exclude some of the providers in your care team. So if you go to an aboriginal health centre, there is a care team that looks after you, which includes a traditional healer and physician, a nurse practitioner, a social worker and a health promoter, but it happens that the nurse on your care team is also your sister-in-law. She's very good and everything, but you don't want your sister-in-law to have access to your record. Well, it was quite easy: When you went in, on the old paper chart it was clear that this person was not allowed to have access to that particular

record. This was respected so that the patient felt at ease to share some very personal information with the rest of the team. Those conditions on consent still have to exist in the new world of the electronic health record.

This bill will still give you the right to withdraw consent to share information on part of your record or to withdraw consent to share information with specific providers. The problem is that the technology does not exist to do that in the electronic format. So we have this beautiful law that you can read to your patient in front of you that says, "You have a right in the law that is passed by this very esteemed Legislative Assembly of Ontario," but come to the ground floor of the things, where it matters, we don't have an electronic health system that allows us to do that. You have to trust the goodwill of people that your wishes will happen.

0930

But there were tangible things that you could see before. There was this envelope, it was sealed in front of you. There was this chart that was flagged with different colours to show that a certain provider could not—well, none of that exists anymore because your electronic health record is electronic and we have to trust the goodwill of people that your wishes will be respected.

This is a big issue. To pass a bill that is going in the right direction—and I fully support what we want to do—knowing full well that it cannot be implemented with the electronic health records that are presently available in Ontario is a bit of an issue with me because I don't want to give people false hope. I don't want to pretend that we can do things that we are not able to do. This will need a bit of work.

As much as I fully support what we are trying to do with this part of the bill that deals with the electronic health records, do we need regulations about electronic health records? Absolutely. I wish we had an electronic health record that functioned properly within Ontario. I wish that if you need a lab result that comes from the health unit, the health unit would not have to print it, fax it to you; once you get it at the other end, you scan it and put it in your electronic health record. Do I wish that we had something better than what we have now? Absolutely. Do I wish that we had a functional electronic health record? Yes. Do I wish that in this electronic health record we can respect the directives of patients regarding their private information? Yes, absolutely. But none of this is happening in Ontario right now.

So we are passing a bill and talking about wishes that everybody wants but that technologically do not exist. Am I the only one uncomfortable with giving people false hope? Am I the only one uncomfortable with passing a bill when I know full well it cannot be implemented in the real world, that the government will be able to say, "We passed a bill that guarantees you that only the people in your circle of care, who you designated, are allowed to see your records, and only the part of your record that you want shared, and we will be able to say that because we will have passed a bill that says just that?"

It cannot be implemented. We don't have the technology to do that. I think it needs a little bit of a reality

check. Let's not give the people of Ontario false hope. Let's not pretend to do things that are not feasible. Do we want to get there? Yes, 100%, absolutely. I want to get there. I want an electronic health record that functions—that would follow you if you are at your primary care provider, at your midwife, at the hospital, at the lab, at the pharmacy. I would love to have that. It would change health care for the better. It would change the way that we are able to provide care. It would give us data to do health promotion and disease prevention that we have never been able to do before. I want to get there. But I don't want a bill that pretends that we are there when we are not. So, here again, there are issues.

I hope this bill won't be time-allocated and I hope that we will give everybody in Ontario a chance to be heard in committee, because there are already many, many stakeholders who are reaching out to us to say that they have issues. They all support the direction that the bill wants to go in, but they want to make sure that we have the technology to make it happen in real life.

The third part of the bill has to do with quality-of-care information. This is a part where, when the bill was first introduced way back, I was able to predict the future. Basically, it is a bill that says that if health care providers are having a conversation to improve quality, then this conversation is shielded from anyone. What had I predicted back then? The health care system has a culture in which it has a really hard time admitting that it has made a mistake.

Don't get me wrong, Speaker. People in the health care system try really, really hard not to make any mistakes. They put systems in place to make sure that they don't make mistakes. But health care providers—physicians, nurses—are human beings, and like every other human being, they make mistakes. When they make a mistake, it is us, our family members or friends or neighbours who live with the consequences of those mistakes.

So what has happened? Well, exactly what we had predicted was going to happen: When somebody makes a mistake, the first thing they do is they say “Oh, this conversation is to improve quality.” And if you say that this conversation is to improve quality, that means the information that is shared will not be FOI-able, will not be shared with the patients or family, will not be shared with other health care providers so that they learn from the mistake. A mistake that has been done in one hospital or one clinic should serve as a red flag for everybody else.

I must say that some hospitals are pretty good. If they have made a mistake, they will have a meeting, they will talk about how the mistake has happened and they will share that information with the family who is affected or with the patient affected by their mistake. But there is also a large number of them who do not, who use that piece of legislation not to improve quality—I suppose it does improve quality because they talk about it. But the main reason why they use that piece of legislation is so that nobody will ever know the mistakes that they have made. They will know. They will have a meeting. They may point fingers at one another. Having been part of

some of those meetings, believe you me, sometimes it's not a pretty sight. But the learning that comes out of this is all kept under lock and key. All you have to do is say that you are working under the quality-of-care information law, that you're having a meeting to improve quality, and then you don't have to share anything.

What does that mean, Speaker? That means that people don't have closure. As I've told you, the health care system tries really, really hard not to make mistakes. But when they do happen, we are the ones who suffer. The patients, the families are the ones who suffer. Those families want to know: Where did things derail? What happened? Why is it that he went in to have an amputation of his left leg and it's now his right leg that is gone? She went in to have a mastectomy to have breast cancer removed and it's the wrong breast that has been taken off—some very, very obvious mistakes.

And when people try to get answers as to what went wrong, they get complete silence because the debriefing—don't get me wrong: The health care providers feel horrible and terrible about the mistake they have made. They know full well that they have completely failed at their basic responsibility of helping people and have made a horrifying mistake. But they will take the bill that has been there and shield themselves, without the family ever knowing what went wrong. For that family, it means that they will never reach closure. They will never know exactly what went wrong. They will never know that things have been put in place to make sure that it never happens again.

0940

With QCIPA, that's the name of the bill—they all have cute acronyms. The Quality of Care Information Protection Act—part of the bill is still very weak. It leaves to regulation what will actually be done to make sure that, when this bill is called upon to shield information for quality purposes, a lot of it will be left to regulations later on down the road. That's not what we wanted. We wanted the changes to be done within the law; that the law be clarified. Everybody and their brother has come forward with medical errors and critical incidents that continue to be a serious problem in our health care system, and they've wanted that piece of legislation to be clarified so that we don't leave it to the 147 different hospitals—because these are the people who use this piece of legislation the most, but it applies to others—so that we don't leave it to 157 hospital corporations to decide.

There are errors that should never occur. Actually, this September, Health Quality Ontario and the Canadian Patient Safety Institute published a report called Never Events. These are, basically, events that should never occur in our hospitals. Unfortunately—and I will read through some of them—every single one of them still happens in Ontario hospitals right now.

The number one thing that should never happen: “Surgery on the wrong body part or the wrong patient, or conducting the wrong procedure.” Unfortunately, those happen.

“Wrong tissue, biological implant or blood product given to a patient.” You all know that, if we do a blood

transfusion with the wrong blood product, drastic things happen.

“Unintended foreign object left in a patient following a procedure.” Those usually make the front page of the paper. You have this X-ray that shows you that you have left a foreign object in a patient.

“Patient death or serious harm arising from the use of improperly sterilized instruments or equipment provided by the health care facility.” We’ve had a number of cases—remember the colonoscopy clinic in Ottawa that had not been sterilizing their equipment properly but had done thousands of colonoscopies, putting all of these people at risk.

“Patient death or serious harm due to a failure to inquire whether a patient has a known allergy to medication, or due to administration of a medication where” the allergy has been identified, but you give them that medication anyway. The list goes on.

“Patient death or serious harm as a result of ... pharmaceutical” errors. The number of pharmaceutical errors in our health care system continues to grow. They should not be happening.

“Any stage III or stage IV pressure ulcer”—better known as bed sores—“acquired after admission to hospital.” Unfortunately, many frail elderly still develop pressure ulcers after they’ve been admitted to a hospital. The list goes on and on.

The bill has to be tightened. When those events happen—I wish they wouldn’t, and health care professionals work really, really hard so that they don’t happen. New procedures, lists and frameworks are put into place so that those incidents never happen. When they do happen, everybody feels horrible. They know that they have failed. They know that they had a part in that failing. The entire team just feels horrible.

But we have to take it a step further so that the patients and their families are allowed into those discussions and allowed to know what went wrong, how come it happened and what will be done so that it never happens again.

There have been some high-profile cases in the Toronto Star investigation, including a newborn baby who was wrongly declared dead, only to be discovered alive an hour and a half later. The hospital interpreted the law in a manner to prevent the release of the internal hospital investigation’s findings and recommendations to both the family and the public.

At the time, Ontario Hospital Association president Tom Closson publicly said that he disagreed with the hospital’s interpretation of the act, and said, “There is nothing under (the act) that says he can’t tell everybody what he is doing to improve the situation so something like that doesn’t happen again.”

We know we have problems with the bill. The bill has some steps that clarify, but leaves a lot of the clarifications to regulation. There are problems with that.

Let me give you another example: the suicide of a 20-year-old man who died while under psychiatric care. The family was unable to learn what happened because the

hospital investigation was carried out under QCIPA—this is the bill that we’re trying to change—and the family is now suing the hospital for \$12.5 million.

In 2014, it was reported that St. Joseph’s and the University Health Network are the only centres in Toronto that keep all internal investigations into critical incidents secret. How do they do this? They do this using this piece of legislation.

UHN held 96 of 96 hospital investigations under QCIPA for the fiscal years 2010 to 2013. Not one of those critical incidents was ever shared. That is 96 families that will never be able to have closure, that will never be able to turn the page. In contrast, Mount Sinai Hospital held only five of their 59 critical investigations in private, and Toronto East General had never used it in five years.

I’m giving you this, Speaker, to show you that it is all over the map. It is up to us, as legislators, to clarify how this piece of legislation can be used, and the sooner we do this, the better.

Unfortunately, some of those concerns have been going on for a long time. The bill that was in response to all of those high-profile cases that were highlighted in our papers is the reason to change the bill. Minister after minister has said that they understand the need to clarify, yet the bill, as we have it in front of us, does not quite cut it.

I see that my time is running out. That happens sometimes. I thought an hour was a long time, but here I am, running out of time.

There is a committee that has basically put out a report that says “strive for a ‘just culture.’” What does a just culture mean? For patients, it means they will be included in the process and informed of the results and changes that will be made following a critical incident.

The intent of QCIPA remains valid. You have to give people an opportunity to share information in a way that they’re not going to be brought into court, and it’s not going to be used against them; it is going to be used to improve the health care system. The part of QCIPA that needs to change is the sharing of information with the families and the people affected, so that they have an opportunity to gain closure and turn the page.

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Unfortunately, Speaker, it looks like I’m going to be out of time. I want to repeat some of the stuff that I said at the beginning. There is a huge flaw in this bill. More and more services are not provided in our hospitals anymore. Whether you talk about cataract surgery or breast screening or colonoscopies or minor procedures—the list goes on and on—they are done in out-of-hospital clinics. Those out-of-hospital clinics are not covered in this bill. They have to be included in the bill.

The number of people who want those three pieces of legislation—the ones about how we safeguard personal information, how we use electronic health records and how we make sure that the results of critical incidents are shared with the people affected—have all been in the media. There are a whole lot of people out there who

wanted those changes. Many of the changes are going in the right direction, but there are some big holes.

I want to make sure that this bill is not going to be time-allocated, that this bill will have a chance to go into committee, that people—agencies and stakeholders—who want changes to this bill will have an opportunity to be heard. We owe it to all of the people who have been affected, especially with some of it being retroactive, so that those families can finally get closure.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise to follow the member for Nickel Belt to support Bill 119. Mr. Speaker, I listened attentively and passionately to the comments made by the member from Nickel Belt. I am sure that she will agree with my comments. Both of us come from previous lives as registered health professionals under the RHPA.

This proposed legislation, if passed, will amend a number of pieces of legislation. I have such a short period of time to talk about the bill, but I wanted to acknowledge both the current Minister of Health and the former Minister of Health, now the President of the Treasury Board, as well as my colleagues, the members from Halton and Ottawa South, because they have been advocates and strong, supportive champions of protecting health information records.

There are two sections the member from Nickel Belt talks so passionately about. One is amending the Public Hospitals Act. The number of tragedies she shared with the House—with all of us—and all of us as members here have heard those stories from our constituency offices. I have heard some very sad cases in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt.

But the other piece of information the member opposite talked about earlier is the divulging and disclosing of personal health information when health professionals are not practising professionally. The amendment to the Personal Health Information Protection Act is critical because we have heard tragedies such as those involving the former mayor of Toronto and the former federal leader of the New Democratic Party. That information is privileged. When you have health professionals who are not conducting themselves professionally, Mr. Speaker, there must be consequences to ensure those records are protected.

The other piece of information that we also need to be speaking about is the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, because that particular act deals specifically with the disclosure of information during critical investigations.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure for me to comment on the address this morning by the member from Nickel Belt. I want to first of all commend her for the tremendous work she does as a critic in health care. I don't think there are many people who could say she isn't one of the most thorough critics in this Legislature—every-

thing we've had, quite frankly. She does her research. She does her homework. I may not always agree with how she feels about specific issues but I do commend her for the work that she does in that regard.

She has obviously done a whole lot of work in researching Bill 119, and she has pointed out some of its weaknesses and some of its attributes as well. That is, in fact, what our job here is, as opposition: to point out where we believe that legislation could be improved or where there are some inadequacies that need to be either withdrawn from the bill or stepped up in regard to the strength that they apply to the bill.

When we're talking about health care information and records, that is one of the most vitally sensitive issues that people can ever have. People are very, very sensitive about their health information. The reality is there is definitely a stigma out there. If you have an issue with regard to certain kinds of health care, it can affect a lot of things in your life, so guarding that information is vital. That's why we have such strong protections on health care records, and it is absolutely imperative that we continue to do so. This bill looks to perhaps strengthen protection in some of those regards. I'm hoping that at the end of the day, it will actually succeed in that.

I'm only speaking for a couple of more seconds here, but we're looking for the opportunity for all members of our caucus to have an opportunity to speak to this bill. We hope the guillotine doesn't fall on this one, because it's a very, very important piece of legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's always a privilege and an honour to be in the House and listen to the member from Nickel Belt. She has championed many, many of the files within her critic portfolio; from CCACs to LHINs to Ornge she raised the alarm bells, she raised the flags and she raised the concerns. It's because of her tenacity and her tireless work that we actually get some results here at the House. She needs to be recognized for that amount of work that she consistently puts in.

She raised one big issue that resonated with me through all of the points she raised this morning: that the core of our health care system is trust. Once that trust is gone, it's very difficult for us to bring it back.

She talked about protecting patient information through electronic records, through accountability and transparency. At the core here, again, what she raised was making sure that these issues are protected and that they have the proper opportunity or that there are proper regulations, laws and institutions in place to make sure that that information is not made available to those who shouldn't have that information. By opening up that information, we've opened up services to privatization. What that has led to is lack of accountability and less transparency, and that takes the trust out of the system.

She also talked to great extent in regard to the challenges that hospitals are facing as well with flatlined budgets for the last four years, and that won't be changing next year as well.

She also talked about the home care sector, which is heavily privatized, along with long-term-care beds. Again, greater transparency is needed in that field. And privatization, what happens? It leads to lack of transparency and accountability; it leads to lack of trust.

She talked about personal protection of information, particularly the medical one and the fact that we don't have the proper technological advances that are going to be there to protect that information. We need to have that because we're giving false hope to individuals.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Chris Ballard: It's quite a privilege to be able to rise today and make a few comments about the proposed legislation, the Health Information Protection Act. I'll echo the comments of a number of speakers previous to me in saying that when the member from Nickel Belt stands to speak on a topic such as this, we pay attention, because she is very passionate and has done her homework. Although we may not always agree with her conclusions, we certainly listen and we certainly pay attention. I thank her for the work that she has done in today's presentation.

I just wanted to touch briefly on a number of things that the amendments will make to this legislation; specifically, that the proposed legislation will require that custodians report privacy breaches to the Information and Privacy Commissioner as well as to the regulatory college when breaches result in action. It removes the six-month limitation for the prosecution of offences and doubles the maximum fines for individuals to \$100,000 and organizations to \$500,000.

I think that's extremely important as over the past few years we've become aware of some horrific breaches of privacy with regard to medical records.

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It modernizes the definition of a privacy breach. It establishes rules and regulations for the shared records and establishes a consent management framework for patients through regulation. As well, it creates an advisory committee to make recommendations to the minister on privacy matters. So, clearly, some very positive steps are being taken in moving this forward.

I know that some of the related amendments on non-hospital-care facilities, when we're looking at those, a number of associations have indicated their interest in working with the Ontario Hospital Association and Health Quality Ontario to train members on how to appropriately use the legislation.

Thank you for your time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member from Nickel Belt. You have a two-minute response.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you for the comments from my colleagues.

I think everybody agrees that we want to protect personal information. We want our electronic health records to work. And we want to make sure that health professionals have a safe place to talk about adverse events that

went on while they were offering care, at the same time finding the right balance to share with the people affected so that they can gain closure.

The aim of the bill is good. It is in the details of the bill that sometimes good intentions derail because of a loophole or because of a part of the bill that is poorly written. In this particular piece of legislation, we have both.

I think we can all agree that if we take our time, if we take the time to listen—and for this particular bill, finding the right balance will only happen if we make sure that we take our time, that at second reading we allow everybody who wants to talk to us to come and talk to us for more than four minutes on the clock. I ran out of time to tell you everything I had to say about this bill and I had an hour to do so. We have to have meaningful consultations with our stakeholders, with the health care professionals affected and their colleges so that we can move forward.

Each and every one of them agrees with the direction, but the bill leaves big areas unclear, areas such as: Why is it that the reporting is different if it's a paper chart rather than an electronic chart? Nobody can make sense of that in 2015. A chart is a chart; the requirements should be the same.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you very much, Speaker. Good morning to you. I'm glad to have the opportunity to have our leadoff on Bill 119. First reading was back in September. We're now in December and we're finally getting the chance to start debate on this legislation.

I find it quite interesting that if you look at the original date of this bill, it's 2004. It's 2015 and we're doing an amendment. I'm glad the amendment has come forward, although I feel with the way technology is continuing to expand, it should be occurring more often; to increase the frequency of having these amendments in order to keep up with evolving technology and how we have an understanding of how data is stored and accessible.

If you look at how our lives have changed over the years with regard to how we're online all the time—no matter if we want to be or not. The young people who are here today probably never knew a time when there wasn't a cellphone, let alone a smart phone, and the access to data and technology. When I was your age, there were no cellphones. That's kind of weird to think about. Mr. Speaker, I'm sure—I was going to go down the line of, "There were probably no TVs when you were younger," but I'm just joking. I'm sorry.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): He's aging me.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: You can shut him down, you know. You have that right.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Anyway, I find it very interesting, the fact of how much of our lives are no longer our own anymore and how much is actually created into some form of data either online or in the cloud. It doesn't take much for us to lose our privacy and our autonomy through

a slip-up in the protections we have in our technology. You just look at the group Anonymous that's out there. When they want to go to work and find out secrets of people, they're able to get the access and to break the barriers that are out there in order to reveal information. I'm glad for Anonymous in one aspect; they've decided to take ISIS to task and have begun fighting them on the technology front. We see how important that is if organizations around the world are fighting terrorism through going after their technology and data.

We realize that we need to have proper legislation in place in Ontario to protect the data that is accessible in our daily lives. Look no further than the health system and how we are evolving from a paper-based health system into a technology-based one. I think it's great. I come from the pharmacy world, and pharmacists were probably the first health professionals to grasp hold and utilize technology and move everything into the computer world. That started 30 years ago.

I remember working in my father's pharmacy on weekends because I was not of age to work during the week. My dad would take me up on Sundays to help do the chores in the store. I'd fill chocolate bars, sweep, clean, make price changes. During that time, our store bought a computer system and a lot of Saturdays were spent transcribing all the personal data of people onto the computer system. At that time, there was no thought whatsoever to having any encryption or protections for the data in the computer system as there are today.

So pharmacy moved into utilizing technology years ago and they've grasped that. Now we have other medical professionals, health care professionals, grasping hold of the technology sector. You look no further than eHealth, which has been created, and the fact that doctors are now transcribing patient information into the computer system. I've seen the process myself. Again, I'm going to refer back to my pharmacy. Five or six years ago, I'd say 80% of the doctors were still writing out prescriptions. It did give me a special skillset; I was able to read anybody's handwriting at any time and figure out what they wanted. But it wasn't a safe way to deliver information to the pharmacist, because sometimes you had to call the doctor and go, "What the heck are you writing here?"

But now, today, I'd say the majority of doctors have moved on to a technology that prints out the prescriptions, but also keeps all of the information on their database. That is what we need to protect. Some doctors' offices are able to talk to hospitals and transmit information back and forth. As eHealth develops, there will be all the hospitals online and all the doctors talking to each other, and then we're going to have to include the labs and we'll have to include the pharmacies and other allied health professionals into accessing this data, which is important and why we need to continually maintain and update our Personal Health Information Protection Act.

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As I said, 2004 was quite a while ago. In the technology world, that was billions of years ago, really, when you think about how fast technology advances and

grows. So it is very important that we look at how we can protect it, because we have to look no further than certain cases of people accessing data. I don't think a lot of people do it maliciously; I think that some people—because it's easier now; you don't have to go into a filing system and pull out someone's file or have a special key to unlock a cabinet. You can be in front of a computer and you might be thinking, "My neighbour has just come into the hospital; I just want to check on them," and you can access all of their information. There may be something in that data that they did not want people to know, or only certain people. That is what you need to ensure you safeguard. One access of somebody's data without that person's permission is one too many.

I hope that, as we go forward with the legislation, we continue to relook at ensuring that protections are in place. The people of Ontario deserve to know that they are protected in the health care system. Hopefully this bill, and future bills down the road, maintain a system that's accountable, that's transparent and that ensures the privacy of each and every Ontarian in this province and, I would include, across Canada. As we grow, I imagine the databases will eventually be linked throughout the country. We need to ensure that we're at the forefront of ensuring protections for Ontarians.

It can happen down the road. We have a health care system which is fairly fragile. It has a ton of money going into the system but small amounts for certain areas. We have over \$51 billion spent in the health care field; however, that is stretched pretty thin. We've seen that with cuts that are going on in the health care system in order to maintain its growth, and also at the same time to make up for lost money in other sectors of the government.

From what I've read in this legislation, in 2014 there were 439 cases of information breaches reported to the privacy commissioner's office. That's 439 too many cases; I would say that even one case is one too many. It seems unfortunate that, although we're doing this update now, the province of Ontario is the last province to actually update the legislation to ensure that we're taking care of our health policy.

That's why I went back to how fragile our health care system is. We're last in the country to make the changes necessary to protect our privacy. Probably it's not because it wasn't important; I think they prioritized where the money and resources have gone—and I know this government has spent themselves into a corner and they're having difficulty making ends meet—I'm sure this got bumped. And we can't let this continue to be bumped because technology is going to be key to delivering cost-effective, quality health care. We need to utilize it as it expands and grows, but we also need to make sure that we have the protections in place to ensure that data is safe and secure and Ontarians can be assured that when they go to their doctor, the hospital or the pharmacy, their health care data is only accessible by those who have the permission to do so.

Hopefully at the end of the day we have an understanding in the province of the importance of having this

data accessible to improve patient care, and we also have an understanding that privacy is ensured, much like we know privacy was ensured in doctors' offices pre-computer, when they were in files and only certain people had access to it. It couldn't necessarily be your neighbour, friend or whoever. Perhaps it's a foe in your life wanting to find some secret information about you and bring that out to the forefront. We need to ensure that privacy is protected and, hopefully at the end of the day, convict those who do break the rules.

In 2004, when they brought out the Personal Health Information Protection Act, we wanted to protect the privacy of patients. There has not been a conviction of a privacy breach in this regard.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to welcome Michelle Saunders from FCPC, taking in question period today. Welcome.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: The mother of page Megan Faith Ally is in the visitors' gallery, and I just wanted to recognize that she's here.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to welcome my LA, Emily Kirby; her mother, who had a birthday yesterday, Karen Hunter; and her dad, Philip Kirby, to Queen's Park. Welcome.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Today, our page captain is Brooke Westwater. Joining us this morning in the members' gallery are her mother Susan Westwater and her father Bruce Westwater. Please give them a warm Queen's Park welcome.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to welcome to the Legislature Francesco Filice, who is the grandson of Frank Filice, the long-time inhabitant of this building also known as Frank the Barber.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'd like to introduce two incredible members of my constituency office staff who are here at Queen's Park today. First of all, Crystal Caputo has been working with me for a long time and does an amazing job, and the newest member of our staff who we welcome warmly is Vicki Plouffe. Welcome to both of you.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Just speaking to the leader here—together we'd like to welcome Judy Duncan, who is here to visit us today. Welcome.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm pleased to welcome my constituent and friend, Donna Lajeunesse, to the Legislature today.

Hon. Jeff Leal: In the east members' gallery today, we have some directors from Beef Farmers of Ontario: Arden Schneckenburger, who is a director; Rob Lipsett, who is a director; and Richard Horne, who is the manager

of policy. We certainly welcome them to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Jim McDonell: This morning I want to welcome Arden Schneckenburger and Richard Horne. They're here from the Beef Farmers of Ontario. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a good pleasure to welcome the student leaders from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance visiting the House today. Please join me in welcoming them.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure this morning to introduce a former colleague of mine—we worked together in London—Judy Duncan. Welcome, Judy.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to welcome to the Legislature St. Matthew Catholic School from the great riding of York South—Weston. Welcome.

Mr. Michael Harris: Watching from home is my son Lincoln. He's turning two today. I want to wish him a happy birthday.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm delighted to introduce this morning representatives of the Ontario Principals' Council: Brian Serafini, who is the president; Ian McFarlane, the executive director; Kelly Kempel; Steve Toffelmire; Mary Linton; Mary Edwards; and I see Peggy Sweeney hiding in the corner over there somewhere, from the OPC staff. Welcome, everybody.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to welcome some of my guests here today: Mary Linton, the former principal of North Bridlewood Junior Public School—welcome to Queen's Park—as well as Captain Rick Zelinsky, Captain Deana Zelinsky, Captain Michael Ramsay, Patricia Elkerton, Major Chris Rideout and Major Tina Rideout. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. David Zimmer: Page captain Taylor Dallin, of course, is here today, but also her mother Gloria Yoon and her friend Hyunju Kang are in the gallery. Welcome.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: On behalf of my colleague the MPP from Davenport I would like to welcome to the Legislature page Michelle Lewis; her brother, Peter Lewis; and a friend, Serena Chiu. Also, friends and former pages Misha Davies Gedalof and Gabe LiVolsi are here in our members' gallery. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Mitzie Hunter: I'd like to join my colleague the MPP from Scarborough—Agincourt in welcoming members of the Salvation Army who are here in the east members' gallery today. I had the pleasure of attending the Scarborough Citadel on Saturday for the Scarborough Philharmonic presentation. I know you do outstanding work in our community in Scarborough, so thank you.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I have two people to introduce this morning: Edward Callighen, president of the Canadian Tooling and Machining Association, and Carol Hochu, president and CEO of the Canadian Plastics Industry Association. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): With us in the Speaker's gallery are friends of mine. I welcome Albert, Mary Beth and Trevor Duwyn. We'll be having lunch today. Thank you for joining us today.

There being no further introductions, it's now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Premier: The Auditor General's winter road maintenance report stated that the cost for taxpayers for new plows and sanders was \$15 million a year. However, the minister keeps saying the government is paying for a service.

I'm going to be blunt: Services are intangible. Plowing the road: That's a service. Plows and sanders are tangible; they are equipment. If the government added 158 new vehicles, as they claim, they paid for equipment, not a service.

Did the government pay for plows and sanders, and if they did, why do the taxpayers not own them?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I believe that the most important thing that we can do as a government is to keep roads safe in this province. That's the whole point of having these services. So if the Leader of the Opposition is proposing—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to ensure that I hear the questions today.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If the talking continues even when I'm standing, I'll go into warnings.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If he's proposing—

Mr. Steve Clark: He's asking you a question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Leeds–Grenville, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —that the services that are provided by the contractors are not critical, then I think he needs to look again at what's needed on our roads.

Our government has the highest level of standards. Our record is of having either the safest or the second-safest roads in North America for the last 13 years. That is the point. We're ensuring that the roads and highways that our families in the province rely on are well maintained and safe.

We made changes to the maintenance contracts that required contractors to improve service levels and to add equipment. That was part of the contract that was signed with the people who provide this service.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: As usual, the government is scrambling to get their story straight.

The Minister of Transportation is a lawyer and would know the difference between a contract for a service and a contract to purchase equipment. So let me put it this way: I've never heard of anyone who hires a contractor, like a carpenter, who also has to buy a hammer for them

to get the job done. It makes no sense for the government to have hired snowplowing companies to plow the roads, then to have to purchase for them the plows and the sanders to do the job.

The government took the lowest bidder when the next-highest bidder had enough equipment to do the job. Why didn't the Liberals require the winning bidders to have enough equipment to do the job? It's such a basic concept.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We made changes to the maintenance contracts, as I said, that required contractors to improve their service and to add equipment. That was part of the contract. The improved service levels mean that new contracts will have the same amount of equipment, if not more. That is part of the contract; those are part of the terms of the contract.

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Our highway maintenance action plan is our next step in making road conditions better: improving the Ontario 511 website; launching a Track My Plow program in the Owen Sound and Simcoe areas, with further expansion, so people can know where the plowing is being done; and increasing the use of anti-icing liquids before winter storms.

Mr. Steve Clark: It all started with the new transportation minister—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville, second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will just say to the member opposite, again, the level of service is what is critical. The standards are what is critical. We have ensured in the contracts that the equipment levels were increased and that those equipment levels stay high.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's on you, Premier.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If you want to talk while I'm asking you to stop, then that's what you're going to get. Anyone else that decides to do that gets it today.

Carry on.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again for the Premier: The snow job of spin doesn't add up. The Auditor General's report showed—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Agriculture, come to order.

Mr. Patrick Brown: —that the cost for new equipment was nearly \$15 million. On Monday, the transportation ministry said that they didn't buy plows. Yesterday, they claimed that they added 158 new vehicles.

Your story changes by the day. Once again, we see that when the government gets caught red-handed, they

can't get their story straight. Last time, it was money taken out of the classrooms; this time, it's money taken from road safety.

Hon. Liz Sandals: We haven't taken any money out of the classrooms.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Education, come to order.

Mr. Patrick Brown: It's time for the Premier to clear up the confusion that her transportation minister has caused.

Will the Premier tell us, was the Auditor General wrong when she said that the Liberals paid for new equipment, or did the Liberals mislead the Auditor General?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

The member will withdraw.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The standards that are in place are among the highest in North America, which is why our roads, for 13 years, have been the safest or the second safest in the province.

There are children in the galleries today, and I want to say to those children—because I have grandchildren. I was the Minister of Transportation. I ensured that the standards that we have in place are the highest possible. We have stuck to those standards, and I will say—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm moving to warnings.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want those children to be safe on the roads, whether they're in cars or whether they're in buses.

Let me tell the member opposite, one of the conversations that we had—

Mr. Randy Hillier: No one is safe from your—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: One of the conversations that we had when I was Minister of Transportation is in fact that we are adapting to new weather conditions—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds-Grenville is warned.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I hear the heckling from the other side: "Oh, new weather conditions." The reality is—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener-Conestoga is warned.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We are seeing the effects of climate change across this country. We are working. Why? It is very important that we have the right equipment, that we have the right amount of de-icing fluid. Things are changing in the north, in the south and across the globe. If the people opposite don't want to acknowledge that, the children in the gallery certainly do.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

New question.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: Since I can't get a straight answer on the transportation file, let's try health care.

I want to share with you the effects that the Liberal government's cuts are having on doctors. I will share with you what was written by Dr. Priya Suppal, a family doctor for the last 22 years, in Brampton. She says that patient care will be compromised; patients will have to wait; patients will not hear a familiar voice at the other end of the phone—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. The Deputy Premier is warned.

Carry on.

Mr. Patrick Brown: They will no longer have a dedicated person at each office doing referrals, to ensure patients are seen in a timely manner.

She said, "If the Ministry of Health thinks the cuts" will not affect "patient care, they are wrong."

Is Dr. Suppal of Brampton wrong when she says the government's cuts are going to affect patient care?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will just say to the Leader of the Opposition—I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care is going to want to weigh in on this because he is in conversation with the OMA—that we value our doctors in this province. That's why we have increased health care funding every year, increased health care funding across the board. We know there are challenges that are faced by the health care system. We know we have an aging demographic. We know doctors are obviously a fundamental part of the delivery of health care.

We've engaged with doctors. The Leader of the Opposition is asking that and believes that we should be paying doctors more. They are the highest-paid physicians in the country. That is evidence of how much we value them. We will continue to work with the OMA because we do value them so highly.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: What I'm saying is that you can't take \$800 million out of the health care system and think it doesn't affect patient care.

Dr. Suppal continues: They will not be able to offer blood work to their patients. They will no longer be able to call patients to remind them of their upcoming appointments. They will no longer be able to deal with prescription renewals over the phone or fax. The staff will be rushed and appear not to care. But unlike the Premier, Dr. Suppal and her staff do care. They care about patients.

What does the Premier have to say to Dr. Suppal and her patients? Should they ignore your cuts? And don't

pass the buck to the health minister. There's not a single doctor in this province who supports these cuts—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The deputy House leader is warned.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm extremely proud of the fact that since we came into office in 2003, we've increased the supply of physicians in this province by 26%. More than 5,000 new doctors are practising here. When you compare that with the growth in population, the growth in population over that time has been roughly 10%. We've been adding doctors and continue to add doctors at the rate of 700 net new doctors each and every year. That's important, so we continue to provide that important front-line care.

Consistent with that increase in flow of doctors providing that front-line care, every single year since we have been in office we have increased the budget for physician services, as we should, to take into account the growing population, the changing demographics. We increased the budget last year for physicians, this year, next year. I expect that will continue into the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Back to the Premier: To hear this spin again and again and again—what I have not heard is an example of a single doctor. There are 26,000 doctors in Ontario. Give us one doctor outside this Legislature who actually supports your cuts. It's bad enough what this government has done to family doctors, but they're hurting entire regions. Linda Silas, president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions said, "In North Bay, and across northern Ontario, we are seeing ... severe cuts." North Bay Regional Health Centre was forced to cut almost 160 positions and close more than 30 beds in an attempt to stave off the flood of red ink. Sudbury and District Health Unit laid off four more employees just last month. Dr. Andrew Touw from Timmins has warned that doctors will leave the city because of the cuts.

You think this is all a joke. You are hurting and damaging health care. How do you defend it? How do you justify it?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister of Health.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It's true that after a more than 60% increase in their compensation over the last decade, we have asked our doctors to take a modest compensation change so that we can make that difficult but important choice to invest in home and community care, to invest in mental health services in the community, to invest in increased wages for our PSWs. Those are diffi-

cult decisions to make, but I believe that they're the right decisions for this province.

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It's in the context that there is no cap on any individual doctors' billings. We are never going to ask them to work for free. We're going to pay them for every single service that they provide. There is no impact on health services because we're asking for that modest change over this difficult time so we can invest in those health care issues in the province that I know our doctors support. Many of them come to me and express their support for those investments.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. Today, Ontario's Auditor General will be reporting on Hydro One. Sadly, because of this Liberal government's decision, this will be the very last time it's going to happen because when the Premier decided to sell off Hydro One, she changed the rules so that the Auditor General of Ontario can no longer report on Hydro One. Can the Premier explain why she thinks that Hydro One doesn't deserve independent, public oversight?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite knows full well that there are other oversight mechanisms that are in place for a publicly owned company, which Hydro One will be once we broaden its ownership.

In terms of what the auditor is or is not going to say, I'm not going to weigh into that. She will be tabling her report around 11:30, I believe.

The job of the Auditor General is to look at government and to look at the way services are provided and to look at the way government functions and to provide a critique of that. We welcome that. We will work with the Auditor General, whatever her report says. It is a healthy aspect of democracy that we have that kind of objective assessment of how government operates.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: That healthy part of democracy is something that this Premier is stripping from the province of Ontario.

Ontario has an Auditor General whose job it is to make sure that public money is properly spent and to raise alarm bells when it's not properly spent. Sadly, the Premier decided that public, independent oversight of Hydro One is no longer necessary. Will the Premier tell the people of Ontario why her commitment to transparency doesn't extend to Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, as I said, the member opposite knows that a publicly traded company has different oversight mechanisms in place than a crown corporation. Hydro One will remain regulated but there will be different oversight mechanisms. What will be in place is an ombudsperson. In fact, the person who has been hired to do that is Fiona Crean. I know that Ms. Crean will report directly to the board of directors in order to ensure independence and to allow the board to provide strong support for any recommendations made.

I think that there are members of the third party who have lauded Fiona Crean in the past for work that she has done, so I'm sure that they're supportive of that appointment. We've also asked Denis Desautels, former Auditor General of Canada, to oversee the establishment of the ombudsperson's office to ensure that transparency and accountability are in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: None of this oversight that the Premier is talking about is publicly funded by the people of Ontario, and that's why it's unacceptable.

It's ironic that the auditor is reporting on Hydro One today. It's ironic because it was six months ago that the Auditor General and seven other legislative officers responsible for oversight called on the Premier to stop this process of eliminating the public oversight of Hydro One.

Ontarians can count on the auditor to give them the facts that the Premier would rather never see the light of day, whether it's the cost of the gas plants, the Ornge air ambulance scandal, the waste of \$8 billion for sweetheart P3 deals or the truth about privatized road maintenance.

Why did the Premier eliminate public, independent oversight of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the member opposite knows that we remain committed to Hydro One's continued regulation, to accountability and transparency. It will be a different kind of organization; there's no doubt about it. It will be a publicly traded company, Mr. Speaker. It will continue to be governed by Ontario laws, including the Business Corporations Act and the Securities Act. It will continue to file information with the Ontario Securities Commission. In addition, Hydro One will annually disclose its compensation of the CEO, every member of the board of directors, the chief financial officer and the three other highest-paid executives of the corporation.

We are making a change. There is no doubt about that. We are making this change because we need to invest in infrastructure in this province. The third party does not support the investment in infrastructure in the province. That's the reality, because they don't support funding it. If you don't support funding it, you don't support the investment in the building.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My next question is again to the Premier. It's been almost one year since Bill 15, the Fighting Fraud and Reducing Automobile Insurance Rates Act, passed in this House, but many people in Ontario will tell you that they're certainly not paying any less for insurance.

The Liberals made a promise—a commitment—to Ontarians to reduce auto insurance rates by 15% by last August. They haven't even reached half of that target. They've broken that promise, Mr. Speaker. They've broken that commitment. Our insurance system is broken,

and the government has not prioritized fixing it. They simply can't be trusted to fix this problem.

When will the rates come down by the 15% promised by this government?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite knows—and I know that the Minister of Finance will want to weigh in on this—the member of the third party knows that, on average, insurance rates have come down over 6%. We are still working with the industry to make sure that we do everything we can to continue those reductions. But those reductions are on average. They are across the driving population. So, in fact, there are people who have seen their insurance rates go down. I have had people in my own constituency office who have come in and told us that their insurance rates have gone down. But one of the things we know is that when there's an average, not everyone will see exactly the same impact.

We're going to continue to work to remove fraud from the system, to make sure that people continue to get the protections that they need, but it does take time. It is on average across the whole driving population, and we're working with industry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The Premier knows that a promise was made to reduce insurance rates by 15%. The Premier knows that this promise was broken. The Premier knows that this promise was not even achieved by half. The Premier knows that they cannot do the job of fixing this problem.

In addition to this problem of not reaching the 15% reduction, the government has thrown the insurance industry into chaos. When the problems with Bill 15 were raised—that without clarifying when a certain clause would apply, they plunged the system into chaos. There are hundreds of thousands of dollars in court challenges of a simple clause: whether or not Bill 15 applies retroactively or whether it applies from January 1 moving forward. This government purposely excluded this clarifying point, plunging the system into chaos.

They've withdrawn our services, withdrawn coverage, cut benefits, and have now plunged the system into chaos. When will the Premier follow through on the promise to reduce insurance by 15%?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Just this spring, and despite strong objections as are coming right now from the opposition, we have passed new rate-reducing legislation that will benefit drivers soon—notwithstanding the fact that they have initiated delays in enabling us to actually get those rates reduced.

In the meantime, reductions have occurred. They are continuing because of some of the very programs that we've put in place, including trying to expedite matters more quickly for the benefit of those who are victims, those who are requiring the benefit. That's exactly where we want the money to go and that's exactly what we're doing. The member opposite voted against those measures, Mr. Speaker, and now he has the audacity—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To make it clear: My resolve has not changed from this morning.

Final supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: This government has plunged the insurance situation into chaos by not clarifying when the regulatory changes will take effect. They've created increased courtroom expenses.

From 2010 to 2014, insurance premiums rose dramatically, accident benefits were slashed and the benefits were clawed back even further as a result of Bill 15.

Independent studies show that the Liberal changes to the insurance regime in Ontario have resulted in drivers overpaying by \$1.5 billion. The same report also shows that insurance profitability has reached nearly double the levels deemed reasonable.

It's clear that by slashing benefits, by cutting coverage, the insurance industry is benefiting tremendously because of this Liberal government, but Ontario drivers are not seeing any of those savings. Is the Premier giving up on her promise to reduce insurance premiums by 15% and instead continuing to benefit insurance companies and not the drivers of this province?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Rates are going down. They would have gone down a lot faster and a lot more dramatically had the members opposite supported the initiative from the beginning.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, we have a competitive system. There are a number of companies already providing reduced rates. As a result of winter tires and so forth that we've provided, there are a number of them that are already providing 50% reductions. We encourage those who are watching and elsewhere to make those calls and do a competitive analysis, because there are opportunities available.

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But, once again, we have conditions. We have to lower the cost. The member opposite and his party have obstructed the very initiatives to reduce costs in the system to enable premiums to go down. We'll fight for the drivers and we'll fight for the people of Ontario to have reductions in those costs by initiating the very measures that we put in place, notwithstanding that they're voting against those very measures.

HOUSING SERVICES CORP.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The minister says he hasn't heard any complaints about the Housing Services Corp., but he received Mayor Tory's letter this year that said that it cost Toronto Community Housing \$6.3 million more for natural gas.

The minister says I won't acknowledge their independent review, but I've talked about that review and pointed out that it didn't solve the problem, and it didn't look at how much HSC is costing housing providers. He says the problem is history, but housing providers are still paying too much for natural gas insurance this year,

and the Housing Services Corp. is spending money on trips to Europe this year.

Could the minister tell us why he is still forcing social housing providers to waste money that could otherwise provide housing for people in need?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'll try again, Mr. Speaker. This was a bill that was originally fronted by the party opposite. They put—

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: It's this year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Oxford is warned.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Did I detect a challenge to the Chair?

Carry on.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: We changed it to make the bill and the operation of the HSC more accountable. We discovered as part of a review that we put in place that there were some problems. We conducted an independent review. That review came back and made a series of recommendations, all of which are being implemented.

We, on balance, are satisfied that we're making very good progress on the HSC front. By the way, I should remind the assembly through you, Mr. Speaker, that it's an independent corporation that makes independent decisions; notwithstanding that, they did work with us around an independent review, and we're satisfied with the results.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is clearly a problem right across the province. If the member wants to stand up and blow his own horn, he should join a brass band, because clearly the program isn't working for communities across Ontario.

This year in Hastings county, they would have saved \$40,000 if they didn't have to buy natural gas through the Housing Services Corp. A couple of years ago, the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus reported that they would have saved 31% if they didn't have to purchase through the Housing Services Corp.

You can do what this government always does, and we just heard what this government always does: They set up a framework to establish a review and have three press conferences. What they really should be doing is delivering some action for communities across Ontario.

Minister, when are you going to let these communities opt out? Counties like Hastings can and want to deliver better, lower-cost social housing for Ontario's most vulnerable.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, Speaker, I already belong to a brass band so I don't need to join one.

But I do want to say that the foundational argument of pooling so that, ideally, everyone benefits together, not at the expense of one benefiting at the expense of all, is a sound principle; it's one I applauded the government opposite for.

You can take a snapshot—and these are snapshots that are being taken by members opposite—at any point in

time to show what you want. But if you look at it over the whole scope of the activities and you speak to the service managers directly, as I have done on several occasions, you discover something that you may be surprised to hear: They're relatively satisfied with the job HSC are doing.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Peggy Sattler: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday, respected violence-against-women experts and front-line agencies came to Queen's Park. They warned that arbitrarily reducing the Partner Assault Response Program from 16 weeks to 12 weeks is unethical and puts the safety of women and children at risk. In response, the Attorney General said 12 weeks is better than zero weeks.

Violence-against-women advocates and women who want the abuse to stop deserve an apology for these shameful and insulting comments. Will the Premier ask the Attorney General to apologize? Will her government finally listen to experts and leaders across the sector, who are unanimous in calling for an immediate halt to the changes to PAR?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to make it clear that everyone on this side of the House is very, very concerned about the services that are provided. We're concerned about the issues that lead to the need for these services. Obviously, we want to have in place services that will help people to stop these behaviours. We want effective services and programs that will allow women to live free of violence and allow perpetrators to change their behaviours. Those are complicated but very, very important programs.

The fact of the PAR Program—we know that it has had success, and we are looking at the evidence. We are looking at what we need to do to make sure that we continue to deliver those services in the best way possible, so that these behaviours will stop.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, reducing the only government program for men who abuse—without any evidence to support the change—is a failure of leadership for women and children.

Yesterday's comments by the Attorney General completely undermine the government's credibility on ending violence against women.

If the only justification for reducing the length of the PAR Program was to create additional spaces, can the Premier explain why 2,000 of the 2,200 new spaces remain unfilled? Why is she using flawed data to push through these changes and ignoring the advice of experts, and her own Roundtable on Violence Against Women, who are calling for meaningful consultation on a review of PAR?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First of all, the member opposite knows that there was not a cut to the funding of the PAR Program. There was a change—

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'm quite happy to acknowledge that there may be a problem. I'm quite happy to acknowledge that there may need to be a change. But I am not going to engage in a discussion when the facts are not on the table. There has not been a cut. There was a reorganization of the program.

There is a review going on. If we need to make a change to that, if we need to change the decision, to make sure that the right processes and the right services are in place, then we will do that.

Mr. Speaker, remember, this is the government that has brought in the toughest policy on sexual assault and violence in the history of the province. We're going to continue on that record.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated please.
New question.

CLIMATE CHANGE CHANGEMENT CLIMATIQUE

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Ma question est pour la première ministre dans sa capacité de ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales. Mr. Speaker, the world has turned its attention currently to Paris, France, as the United Nations climate change conference unfolds. Leaders from all over the world have come together to work towards a common solution to one of the biggest—if not the biggest—challenges facing the global community to date. Because of the leadership at the federal and provincial levels, there is a real opportunity to take action in the fight against climate change.

Au Canada, le premier ministre Trudeau a signalé clairement aux chefs des nations que nous allons reprendre notre statut international de leader.

And here in Ontario, because of the work we've done to reduce our emissions, we are already seen as global leaders in the fight against climate change.

My question, Mr. Speaker: Can the Premier, who is leading the Ontario delegation, please inform this House on what is happening at COP21 in Paris?

L'hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Le changement climatique n'est pas un problème pour l'avenir; c'est un problème aujourd'hui. We have a responsibility in this province, in this country—all of us, as leaders of jurisdictions, have a responsibility to take on this great challenge.

I'm very proud of the steps that Ontario has taken so far, Mr. Speaker, like shutting down the coal-fired plants, the largest single action in North America to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

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It was a privilege for me to be in Paris to work with Premiers from across the country and with the Prime Minister to talk about and to offer what we have done to the global community. That's what COP21 is about. It's about different jurisdictions coming together to share

their experiences, to learn from each other and to encourage one another to take further action.

I'm very, very pleased to say that having a federal government that is now working with us on this challenge is a great, great boon to the project.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} Marie-France Lalonde: Merci à la première ministre pour cette réponse.

Ontario and Canada are certainly well represented on the world stage. An important component in the fight against climate change is making sure that there is co-operation among the global community. We know that this co-operation also needs to happen at the subnational level.

In Canada, provincial governments and municipalities have demonstrated strong leadership and an ability to make positive change when it comes to combatting climate change. That expertise at the local level needs to be shared with other jurisdictions and we have a great opportunity to learn from others as well. Because there is a shared global problem, there needs to be co-operation and collaboration among provinces, states, cities, towns etc.

Can the Premier please inform the House on how subnational governments are taking part in the UN summit?

L'hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Comme j'ai dit, tous les États, toutes les provinces, tous les territoires et tous les pays doivent travailler pour améliorer le changement climatique.

It is not up to one level of government. What we need is all of the federal governments and all of the subnational governments, and by that I mean states, provinces, cities and communities. We all have a responsibility and there is always something that we can do.

I had the opportunity to listen to some of the leaders of very small island nations. They are already experiencing—as are jurisdictions in the far north in Canada—the impacts of climate change. They're having to move people away from the coastlines of their countries in order for people to be safe from flooding.

Having the federal government working with the subnational governments, that's the way that we can have an impact on global climate change.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. Premier, last week, you released your much-ballyhooed save the earth climate change strategy. It's 37 pages—long on self-praise and short on details, but barely a mention of the word “nuclear.”

Premier, nuclear provides 60% of our province's power. It is clean, emission-free, reliable and affordable. But our nuclear units are aging and many of them are in need of refurbishment. We're hearing nothing from your government on this issue.

Our ability to provide emission-free power depends on our nuclear fleet operating efficiently. Premier, when can we hear from the government about showing some sup-

port for the nuclear industry like you show for some of your other chosen forms of generation? When can we hear some support and a plan for ensuring that Ontario will have emission-free nuclear power for decades to come?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think this is a friendly question, because if you look at our long-term energy plan, the member opposite will see that nuclear forms the baseload well into the future. We have no intention of moving away from a baseload of nuclear. We know full well that that means the refurbishment of our nuclear stock.

I'm not sure exactly where the member opposite is going. Maybe he just wanted to be able to ask a question that had some notion of climate change in it, so he thought he'd throw in that word. We're keeping nuclear; it's the baseload of this province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Supplementary?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I've asked for attention here.

Supplementary, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The Premier loves to throw potshots at people who don't necessarily agree with everything she says, but the reality is this: She can talk all she wants, but until they actually do something to ensure that our nuclear fleet will be operating well into the next several decades, then we have a problem. If that schedule is not an efficient one, we will see—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry. The Minister of Economic Development is warned.

Carry on.

Mr. John Yakabuski: We will see greenhouse gas emissions rise in this province dramatically. If our nuclear fleet has units taken down simultaneously, we will not be able to provide that emission-free power that Ontario depends so much upon. So it's not just weasel words for nuclear. Stand up and put out a schedule as to when refurbishment will take place, because that is necessary in this province.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Names, Premier. Tell us some names, Premier.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): First of all, I would like to try to talk to the member, and that is to caution him on some of the language he was using. Now that he's done what he has done, I just want to remind him that there are some Ws that are on my list of people who are already warned. I've twice heard now a word that is unparliamentary, and I won't hear it again. If I do, they will be named. If you don't trust my resolve, I'm telling you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We are moving ahead with refurbishment. That's the answer to the member

opposite's question. In fact, the planned refurbishments will create almost 25,000 jobs and generate \$5 billion annually in economic activity. We're moving ahead with significant steps right now to ensure that the refurbishment of Darlington and Bruce are done right. That refurbishment is in the planning stages. The member opposite just has to look at our long-term energy plan to know that we're serious. We're in the process of putting that refurbishment in place.

I applaud the member opposite for supporting our support and our plan to refurbish and to keep nuclear as our baseload. The Minister of Research and Innovation was talking with the nuclear association this morning.

I would encourage the member opposite to take yes for an answer.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. Premier, as you know, the Auditor General is releasing her report on SAMS today. New Democrats obtained, through FOI, the ministry's internal audit of SAMS. From that audit, I'll quote: "We were unable to obtain evidence that the SAMS project has addressed the 2009 Auditor General's findings regarding deficiencies." Another quote: "The 2009 AG findings may lead to the same findings being reported for SAMS in future AG reports."

Speaker, my question is simple: Will the AG report find that the minister has failed to deal with any of the AG's findings from 2009?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said earlier, the Auditor General has not yet tabled her report. We look forward to that.

I know that the Minister of Community and Social Services will want to weigh in on what has already happened with SAMS, but let me repeat what I said earlier, and that is that it is the Auditor General's job to look at government, to look at the services, to look at the way services are delivered, and to have an opinion about the way money is spent. That is a very good thing. It's very good in a democracy to have those objective eyes on what we do. But her job is to find problems that need to be resolved.

We look forward to working with the Auditor General, as we have in the past, to deal with the issues that she identifies and to work with her to make sure that we are providing services in the best way possible for the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Miss Monique Taylor: According to the ministry's own audit, the government has not dealt with the AG's report from five years ago. The audit also laid out—

Interjection.

Miss Monique Taylor: It's their report that we FOled.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To the Chair, please.

Miss Monique Taylor: The audit also laid out serious concerns about SAMS, meaning that the minister was well aware of the issues before its disastrous implementation. The audit references expected delays to the project timelines—sound familiar? We know that countless vulnerable Ontarians experienced these delays. Some faced evictions and others just straight-out cheque delays. We know that front-line workers were forced to shoulder the brunt of the technical problems of SAMS, and they're currently still facing those problems.

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Speaker, again, will today's AG report show that the government continues to ignore concerns raised by the AG's report five years ago?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We are going to wait for the Auditor General's report. The member opposite asks what the AG's report will show us; we're going to wait until she tables it. In fact, the member knows that the auditor has publicly published which areas she'd be reviewing as part of her report. She hasn't tabled her report; she'll be doing that after question period. Actually, she's asked—she actually asked—that the briefing that is going on right now, that the issues not be released publicly, that they not be disclosed before she has a chance to table her report. So we're going to give her that opportunity.

The fact is, it is her job to look at government, to critique, to bring objectivity and to look at what government has done. It is our job as government to respond, to work with the Auditor General, as we have in the past, and we will continue to do that.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Mr. Chris Ballard: My question is to the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. Ontario's trade strategy helps companies export to global markets, which creates jobs here in Ontario. To reach this goal, it's important we reach out to the growing and emerging global markets.

Ontario has reaped great benefits from the government's trade missions, which helped forge and strengthen trade relationships around the world. In fact, last fall the Premier's mission to China secured almost \$1 billion in investments and over 1,000 jobs for Ontarians.

I know the Premier and minister recently returned from another trade mission to China, along with the Minister of Economic Development. Can the minister tell us more about the results of this most recent trade mission?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member for Newmarket–Aurora for asking his question.

Speaker, early in November of this year, Premier Wynne led a trade mission to China. We all know that China plays a critical role in the global economy and continues to outpace other emerging markets. Ontario has strong innovation capabilities in key sectors that are complementary to China. This is why the recent Premier's trade mission to China has been such a huge, huge success. Over the course of the mission, Ontario delegates signed more than 100 agreements with an estimated

value of \$2.5 billion, deals that may create as many as 1,700 jobs.

It was a very successful mission, and I look forward to doing more.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Chris Ballard: I agree with the minister: It's critical to the growth of our economy to identify potential markets and promote Ontario abroad.

Attracting new investment and helping the province's businesses compete globally is part of this government's plan to boost Ontario's economy. It's also part of our efforts to invest in people's talents and skills and to create a dynamic, innovative environment where business thrives.

I'm proud of our Ontario businesses, and the high-quality products that they produce. That's why last year's trade mission to China was such a success. It allowed Ontario's businesses to connect directly with important international markets.

Speaker, could the minister please expand on how this government is connecting Ontarians with global markets?

Hon. Michael Chan: The member is right: Trade missions are the best way for us to connect Ontario businesses with international markets. That's why we work to promote Ontario in many different countries.

Speaker, I also just returned from a trade mission to Germany. There, I participated in many, many key events that will lay the groundwork for successful future missions. I attended the Medica trade show; I was able to visit our sister province, Baden-Württemberg; and I met with Festo Automation as well as Bayer HealthCare, where an Ontario start-up from Kitchener-Waterloo won the Grants4Apps competition.

It is important to promote and sell Ontario around the world, and this government is working hard to do so.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Your government has spent 12 years studying, reviewing and planning the redevelopment of long-term-care homes. You also promised to develop 30,000 beds, so as to ensure safe living environments for our frail seniors. Yet today, after years of shameful neglect and scarce funding, your government has left our long-term-care homes crumbling and 25,000 frail seniors without a long-term-care bed.

The associate minister keeps saying that despite all these facts, there really is a plan. So through you, Speaker, I ask the minister: How many organizations will be approved in the first round of the capital renewal program, when will construction begin and how many of the promised 30,000 beds will be built in round 1?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I thank the member opposite for this question because it certainly gives me an opportunity to talk about all of the good work that we are doing in redevelopment. As I have mentioned many times, Mr. Speaker, there are so many examples that I can share with this House about the redevelopments that are taking place as we speak. In fact, the last time I answered this question, I spoke about the brand new facility in Oshawa.

I was there for the inauguration and what a wonderful event that was.

But we are not resting on our laurels. We are moving ahead. Let me speak about a brand new redevelopment that is taking place as we speak, in Thunder Bay. It's a state-of-the-art facility with over 500 beds, including about 38 new beds and the redevelopment of over 450 beds. That's just one example of the redevelopment that is going on in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Back to the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: Enough with the platitudes. It sounds like your only plan for your government is to wheel the frail seniors out to the end of the curb and say, "We're done with you." Experts tell us the long-term-care system is creeping up to the brink of crisis, as the wait-list will double to at least 50,000 seniors in just six years. So not only is this government failing seniors today, but it's also ill-prepared to meet this looming demographic crisis going forward.

Again, where's the plan? Will the minister please tell the House, here and now, how many new long-term-care beds are going to be built in the next five years, and where in Ontario they will be built?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I think the proof is in the pudding, so let me talk about close to 500 new beds that we brought online in just the last three or four months. I was in Waterloo recently, along with the members from Kitchener-Waterloo, Kitchener-Conestoga and Wellington-Halton Hills, who were there to witness the opening of a brand new facility—brand new beds, right in Waterloo. Before that, I was in Windsor in the fall for the opening of another facility with close to 200 brand new beds. These are just examples of the fact that new beds are coming online as we speak, and will continue to come online as required.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Mantha: Good morning, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Premier. Premier, as you know, the community of Hornepayne in Algoma-Manitoulin is about to be thrown into crisis. Some 146 workers at Haavalsrud and Becker Cogen, approximately 40% of the town's population, have received layoff notices just weeks before the holiday season—not to mention spin-off jobs with trucking companies, suppliers, and lumber and logging companies, that will also be devastated.

We've talked and talked and talked about the flight of badly needed jobs and industry in the north. What will this minister do to help the people of Hornepayne?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the question. Obviously, anytime there is a layoff in any industry, on this side of the House we take it very seriously—anytime, within my ministry responsible for forestry, we take it very seriously. One of the reasons we do that, Speaker, is we also understand very clearly that most of the forestry operations in Ontario are in northern Ontario,

and oftentimes those operations that are in northern Ontario are in very small communities. As a result of those operations being in very small communities, the layoffs tend to have a disproportionate effect on the communities in which they exist.

I would tell my colleague across the floor that we continue to work on the issue. There are partner ministries involved currently that are looking at potential solutions. I'm not here today to promise him in any way that we can find a solution, only that, like with all industries—forestry, in this ministry—we continue to work on it and hopefully we can find a resolution on this issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Once again to the Premier: Given the Liberal government's commitment to green energy and the attention paid to climate change, one would think that projects such as this one would be given priority at the highest level.

The provincial government invested over \$30 million just two years ago to open Becker Cogen and keep the Hornepayne mill up and running. Hornepayne depends on these jobs. These jobs depend on a viable long-term energy agreement.

Speaker, layoff notices have been issued. There's no more time for talk. Hornepayne needs action. What will the Premier tell the people of Hornepayne leading into this holiday season?

1130

Hon. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member for the follow-up.

When I answered this question yesterday, I made general reference to the level of support that our government has provided to the forestry industry, something in the order of magnitude of \$1.3 billion since the industry first had its challenges beginning in 2006-07. I also made reference to the significant level of assistance that we have provided to this company individually as well.

One example of a program of support that we've provided to forestry generally in the province of Ontario is the roads program. Since we've been in government, we have provided, from that one program, over \$600 million of assistance to forestry-based companies in the province of Ontario. Speaker, that's noteworthy, because that program used to be, historically, a government-run program, but that program was downloaded onto the backs of forestry industry partners by the NDP when they were in government in the early 1990s.

We've uploaded that program. We've taken responsibility for it back—over \$600 million in assistance just on that one particular program. The forestry companies in the province—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question.

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, this fall, the people of Ontario reached a very noteworthy record: More Ontarians than ever before registered their

consent to become organ and tissue owners. That's more than 89,000 Ontarians over three months who have made a selfless commitment to save lives—truly a great achievement.

I have registered to become an organ donor and I always encourage family and friends to do the same. I know that the residents of Durham understand the importance of organ and tissue donation and that it's an easy way to potentially make a difference in someone else's life. I am glad to hear that so many Ontarians are making this important decision to register as organ and tissue donors.

Speaker, through you to the minister, what can you tell us about how our province has reached this very important milestone?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you to the member from Durham, not just for the important question but also for registering to be a donor.

Mr. Speaker, it was just seven years ago that Ontario opened the Trillium Gift of Life Network, which is, as we all know, a not-for-profit agency managing Ontario's organ and tissue donation and transplant system. Since its inception, Ontario's organ and tissue donation registration rates have grown significantly.

In fact, nearly 1,000 people register to be a donor each and every day in this province and each person who registers could save up to eight different lives. You can register as an organ donor in person, by mail, through ServiceOntario when you go in to renew your health card or your driver's licence, or you can do it in I would say under two minutes at beadonor.ca.

Today, over three million Ontarians have registered as donors. I want to take this moment to thank each and every one of them their incredibly noble decision to potentially save up to eight lives.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Thank you, Minister. The Trillium Gift of Life Network is an extremely effective and valuable organization, creating an easy and convenient process for Ontarians to register as organ donors. I've heard that Trillium Gift of Life currently has a goal to reach over 233,000 new registrations by March 30, 2016. As of September 30, they had reached 71% of their goal.

I know that we are all here at Queen's Park because we hope to make a positive difference in the lives of Ontarians. It is in that spirit that I urge all members, on both sides of this House, to take a moment out of their day to visit and make the important decision to make a lasting and positive difference.

Speaker, through you to the minister: With so many Ontarians registering to become organ and tissue donors, what does the current need in Ontario look like?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you again to the member from Durham. Every single day, over 1,600 people in this province are awaiting organ or tissue donation. By increasing the number of registered donors, we can reduce the number of lives lost and ease that pain for another family.

The good news is that between July and September of this year, 255 separate organ or tissue transplants took

place in this province. That's a lot of lives saved and a lot of lives changed, thanks to the selfless decisions of Ontarians and their families.

I'll join the member from Durham in encouraging all members of this House, if you haven't already done so—and all Ontarians—to take a couple of minutes to go to the website, beadonor.ca, and register as a vital-organ or tissue donor.

FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Premier. Our first responders know that seconds matter. To our first responders suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, seconds can feel a lot longer. That's why they're frustrated by the government's stubborn unwillingness to support a good idea when they see it.

The Minister of Labour said, "I'm convinced that we must do a combination of what's envisioned in Bill 2, with some improvements to it." So why won't the minister and the government House leader simply bring Bill 2 to committee, where we can amend it and help our heroes with PTSD as soon as possible?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you to the member for this question on this very, very important issue. We all know that PTSD is an issue that disproportionately affects front-line workers in this province and throughout this country. We owe it to them to ensure that they have the protections in place as well as the coverage in place.

The member referenced Bill 2, which was brought to this House by the member from Parkdale–High Park. That, Speaker, is a good bill. That's part of the solution. What we need to do is to ensure that we have protections in place that not only treat those people who have contracted PTSD but also ensure we have a system in place to make sure that we prevent people from getting PTSD in the first place.

What I want to bring back to this House is a bill that makes Ontario a leader. We're very close to that. A lot of people have worked very hard on this, including the first responders themselves. I think what we're going to do is end up leading the country in this, and I'm proud of that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Back to the Premier: We already have a bill on the table, as has been mentioned, with full opposition support. If you have improvements to the bill, let's do it at committee. Let police officers, firefighters, EMS personnel and corrections officers explain to Ontarians how post-traumatic stress disorder impacts their lives.

Instead, you want to introduce your own bill and hold consultations away from the public. Speaker, they're delaying presumptive legislation, and first responders of all stripes are tired of waiting. There's no need to go back to square one.

Why don't our first responders deserve the chance to share their stories directly with the people they have sworn to protect? You owe it to them. Let's do it now.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you once again to the member for that question. I certainly share the end

sentiment that he expressed: that we owe it to the first responders in this province to ensure that they get the treatment they deserve. They're the people who put their lives, on a daily basis, on the line for us, and we owe it to them. We understand that.

But I'll be very, very frank with you, Speaker: Bill 2, in my estimation, is not good enough for the first responders of this province. We can do better than that. We know how to do better than that. We've brought experts to bear on this issue who are bringing us expertise in this regard. At the end of the process, we're going to have all the good parts of Bill 2 and we're going to have the prevention aspects in one comprehensive strategy that's going to make this province a leader and do something this House will be proud of.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Scarborough Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Point of order; thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this morning two of my staff members were here from Scarborough. They don't like coming down here very often, but Maria Fe, and Jessica Bozzo are here today for some training. I just wanted to welcome them to the Legislature today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The Minister for Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I have two staff members here today as well: Scott and Adam from my constituency office. Unfortunately, we don't have Helen; her husband passed away suddenly yesterday.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Cambridge.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a friend in the west gallery this morning. He helped me to win my seat. He's a student at Trinity College at U of T. Isaac Wright, welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins–James Bay on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I have four staff members, but they're back in the constituency working.

ANNUAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2015 annual report of the Auditor General of Ontario.

DEFERRED VOTES

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LES LIMITES DES CIRCONSCRIPTIONS ÉLECTORALES

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 115, An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the

Election Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative Assembly Act / Projet de loi 115, Loi édictant la Loi de 2015 sur la représentation électorale, abrogeant la Loi de 2005 sur la représentation électorale et modifiant la Loi électorale, la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Harris, Michael	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Anderson, Granville	Hillier, Randy	Miller, Norm
Arnott, Ted	Hoggarth, Ann	Moridi, Reza
Bailey, Robert	Hoskins, Eric	Munro, Julia
Baker, Yvan	Hunter, Mitzie	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Balkissoon, Bas	Jaczek, Helena	Nicholls, Rick
Ballard, Chris	Jones, Sylvia	Oraziotti, David
Barrett, Toby	Kiwala, Sophie	Pettapiece, Randy
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Lalonde, Marie-France	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bradley, James J.	Leal, Jeff	Rinaldi, Lou
Brown, Patrick	MacCharles, Tracy	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	MacLaren, Jack	Scott, Laurie
Chiarelli, Bob	MacLeod, Lisa	Sergio, Mario
Clark, Steve	Malhi, Harinder	Smith, Todd
Colle, Mike	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Coteau, Michael	Martins, Cristina	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crack, Grant	Martow, Gila	Vernile, Daiene
Damerla, Dipika	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Dhillon, Vic	McDonnell, Jim	Wong, Soo
Dong, Han	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	McMahon, Eleanor	Yakubuski, John
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted	Yurek, Jeff
Fraser, John	McNaughton, Monte	Zimmer, David
Gravelle, Michael	Meilleur, Madeleine	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gates, Wayne	Singh, Jagmeet
Bisson, Gilles	Gélinas, France	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Hatfield, Percy	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Mantha, Michael	Vanthof, John
Forster, Cindy	Natyshak, Taras	
French, Jennifer K.	Sattler, Peggy	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 74; the nays are 16.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

PROTECTING CONDOMINIUM OWNERS ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PROPRIÉTAIRES DE CONDOMINIUMS

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 106, An Act to amend the Condominium Act, 1998, to enact the Condominium Management Services Act, 2015 and to amend other Acts with respect to condominiums / Projet de loi 106, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur les condominiums, édictant la Loi de 2015 sur les services de gestion de condominiums et modifiant d'autres lois en ce qui concerne les condominiums.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1149 to 1151.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On December 1, 2015, Mr. Oraziotti moved third reading of Bill 106. All those in favour of the bill, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gates, Wayne	Miller, Norm
Anderson, Granville	Gélinas, France	Moridi, Reza
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gravelle, Michael	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Harris, Michael	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Natyshak, Taras
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Nicholls, Rick
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Ballard, Chris	Hunter, Mitzie	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jones, Sylvia	Rinaldi, Lou
Bisson, Gilles	Kiwala, Sophie	Sandals, Liz
Bradley, James J.	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sattler, Peggy
Brown, Patrick	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Chan, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Chiarelli, Bob	MacLaren, Jack	Singh, Jagmeet
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Colle, Mike	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Coteau, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Tabuns, Peter
Crack, Grant	Mantha, Michael	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Martins, Cristina	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Martow, Gila	Vanthof, John
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
DiNovo, Cheri	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Dong, Han	McDonnell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Duguid, Brad	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Fife, Catherine	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMeekin, Ted	Yakubuski, John
Forster, Cindy	McNaughton, Monte	Yurek, Jeff
Fraser, John	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David
French, Jennifer K.	Milczyn, Peter Z.	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 89; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands adjourned until 3 p.m.

The House recessed from 1154 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm not sure of the names of the guests who are here today because I hadn't gotten around to saying hello to them, and the people who,

maybe, invited them here aren't here. So I want to say welcome to all the guests today in the gallery.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MIKE BRADLEY

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'm pleased to rise today to inform the House of the special significance of today's date. It was 30 years ago to the day December 2 that Sarnia's mayor, Mike Bradley, was sworn in for the first time to elected office as an alderman in the city of Sarnia.

Three years later, Mike, at 33 years of age, would be elected to the mayor's office, the youngest mayor in the city's history.

In October 2014, Mayor Bradley was re-elected for a ninth term in office, achieving over 70% of the vote.

During his 30 years in elected office, Mayor Bradley has demonstrated a tireless work ethic on issues that improve the quality of life not just for residents in Sarnia, but for those in communities across Ontario.

In the fall of 2014, Mayor Bradley was personally awarded the Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Award by the Honourable David C. Onley, the Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, in recognition of his outstanding volunteer contributions to Ontario.

Mayor Bradley's extensive record of service makes him the second-longest-serving mayor in Ontario. On behalf of the province of Ontario and all the residents of Sarnia-Lambton, I would like to thank Mayor Bradley for his leadership and service to the community. There's no doubt in my mind that Mayor Bradley is just getting started.

EVENTS IN RIDING OF NIAGARA FALLS

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm proud to rise today to talk about my riding of Niagara Falls. I'll start with Fort Erie.

This year, the Fort Erie Race Track, with its new owners and hard-working employees, had the best year they've ever had in their 117-year history. We still need more race dates and a return of the slots to the track in order to continue to grow and protect the long-term future of our racetrack.

The Canadian Motor Speedway presents the opportunity to create hundreds of jobs, with nearly \$700 million in direct and indirect private investment.

Also in Fort Erie, the Miller's Creek Marina project has the potential to bring investment and help create jobs.

Meanwhile, in Niagara Falls, we have a request for pre-qualifying out for the entertainment centre, which will have up to 7,000 seats. I know how important this project will be to help create good jobs and help make Niagara a year-round tourist destination.

In Niagara-on-the-Lake, tourists continue to pour into the town to support our wineries, our craft breweries, our

craft cideries. And there is still no better place to go than the Shaw Festival to see a show.

Niagara is in a position to help lead this province in its economic recovery. With a GO train expansion all the way to Niagara Falls, we'll be even more prepared to make it happen.

Speaker, it's time for Ontario to recognize the opportunities in my riding and help bring these investments to Niagara. They will build our communities, help our local businesses, support our local workers and their families, and will make my riding of Niagara Falls an even better place to live and raise our families.

EVENTS IN RIDING OF ETOBICOKE NORTH

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I have the privilege, Speaker, of rising and informing not only you but this entire chamber and my residents, the great constituents of the riding of Etobicoke North, of a number of developments that are taking place in the riding. I'll concentrate on three.

First of all, with regard to the hospital, we are funding something in the order of about \$200 million-plus to triple the footprint of the Etobicoke General Hospital part of the William Osler Health System. This will lead to a whole host of new services, whether it's the cardio-respiratory suite, the maternal-newborn suite, diagnostic suites or an entirely new, state-of-the-art emergency department.

Similarly, along with the federal government, we've made a new \$90-million-plus massive student centre at Humber College. I was pleased to meet with a number of students who are now benefiting from that facility.

As well, there is the Finch LRT, which is a new \$2-billion-plus transportation infrastructure development. We have about eight stops strategically located in my riding. They are at Islington, Kipling, Stevenson, Albion, Martin Grove, Westmore and Highway 27, ending at the great Humber College. Speaker, as you can see, Etobicoke North is on the move.

Just in closing, I'd like to salute, recognize and congratulate the first MP of Somali Canadian background, who's just next door to me in York South-Weston: Mr. Ahmed Hussen.

METRIC AID

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I want to talk about a new business in North Bay—well, not so new anymore. MetricAid is a North Bay technology company that has developed a software solution providing financial benefits to hospitals. Their software transforms emergency department physician scheduling. Emergency departments using the MetricAid solution realized improved patient wait times, fewer workload spikes and a positive environment for the practice of better medicine.

This intellectual property was built by a local emergency room physician and a clerk to solve the wait time problem at our hospital. In fact, they have lowered wait

times and improved care for over 500,000 Ontario patients in the last three years.

From a North Bay perspective, this has repatriated many northerners looking to fill hi-tech jobs. They have also attracted many new Canadians.

When I visited their offices—and I must say, they're about the most attractive offices in the city; it's built in a 100-year-old building, and they've kept the old wooden floors and the loading docks and these types of things. I met many of their staff. Two of them now have new babies; two more are on the way. The staff have bought six new houses in the last two years.

As they continue to grow, they're looking to export their expertise to other provinces and around the globe.

I congratulate MetricAid on their start and their existence in the city of North Bay.

SANTA'S PARADE OF LIGHTS

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: This past Saturday evening I had the pleasure of participating in the 21st annual Santa's Parade of Lights.

My team and I were pleased to be joined by the recently elected member of Parliament for Orléans, Andrew Leslie.

Begun in 1994 in an effort to revitalize the former Gloucester Santa Claus Parade, the Parade of Lights has become the largest night-time Santa Claus parade in Canada. This year, there were approximately 140,000 attendees. The parade helped raise money for the firefighters' Help Santa Toy Fund. This fund helps provide Christmas toys to those who may not be able to afford them.

I want to thank the organizers, the Ottawa Professional Fire Fighters Association, led by Bob Rainboth, Ken Walton and Daniel Johnston, and thank you to the judges and to event emcee Denis St-Denis.

A total of 78 floats took part in the parade, and I wish to recognize a few of the floats. The prize for best high-school float went to École secondaire publique Louis-Riel, with best school float going to École Étoile de l'Est. The prize for best Christmas spirit went to DanceR Studio, which danced in sync the whole four kilometres. The prize for best band went to Black Cherry Band. The prize for best community group went to Scouts et Guides Orléans.

Congratulations to all the volunteers who helped make this year's parade such a huge success.

1510

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to recognize Caledon for being one of the top 10 communities with the most improved organ and tissue donor registrations in Ontario. In the last three months, 351 residents of Caledon registered their consent to be an organ and tissue donor. I'm very proud to see communities like Caledon registering to help improve the lives of others. Overall in On-

tario, the registration rates increased as well. From July to September 2015, more than 89,000 Ontarians registered to be organ and tissue donors. Now there are more than three million Ontarians registered.

But more can be done. Too many individuals are left waiting for too long. There are still 1,600 individuals in Ontario waiting for a life-saving organ and tissue donation. As a result, every three days, an individual passes away waiting for their life-saving transplant. Donating your organs and tissues doesn't just save one life. One donor can save the lives of eight individuals and donating your tissue can enhance the lives of 75 individuals. I encourage everyone to take two minutes and register at www.beadonor.ca.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yesterday, I asked the Premier about the privatization of Hydro. This morning, the Leader of the Opposition asked the Premier about government purchases of snow-clearing equipment for private contractors. Instead of answering me or the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier tried to use comments about climate change to divert from the issue at hand.

I know why the Premier doesn't want to talk about privatization. It's unpopular. It's damaging to our image. But to throw climate change forward as a shield against answering questions is dangerous for climate action. It trivializes the issue. It makes it simply a shiny object of diversion.

Speaker, the stakes are too high and the issue is too critical to have it used this way. The Premier and the Liberals are playing with fire adopting this strategy. I urge them to abandon that strategy, answer questions, and don't use climate change as your shield.

MISSISSAUGA SANTA CLAUS PARADE

Mr. Bob Delaney: Each year, on the first Sunday of Advent, families from all across Mississauga line Queen Street in historic Streetsville, from Britannia to Old Station Road, to start the Christmas season with the city's Santa Claus Parade.

Organized by the Streetsville Business Improvement Association and sponsored this year by Enersource and Tim Hortons, the parade showcased 75 groups, led by the Streetsville Pipes and Drums and the Streetsville Legion colour party.

This year, the weather co-operated with Santa. Marchers and spectators enjoyed a dry and warm late November afternoon. Rogers Cable 10 recorded the parade and it will play from time to time between now and Christmas. Many of our schools and community groups dressed for the season and marched for family, friends and neighbours in the kilometre-long procession watched by thousands. Spectators lined the sidewalks, several deep in places.

Andrea and I decorated a golf cart on loan from BraeBen Golf Course. Our cat, Bébé, made her first

appearance in the Santa Claus Parade. Mr. and Mrs. Claus brought up the rear of the parade to join me, Ward 11 Councillor George Carlson, Ward 4 Councillor John Kovac and Mayor Bonnie Crombie in wishing everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous 2016.

JOHNNY LOMBARDI

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I rise today to honour and celebrate the life of Johnny Lombardi, pioneer of multicultural broadcasting and founder of CHIN Radio/TV International, who played a central role in transforming Toronto and Ontario into a society inclusive of diversity.

December 4, 2015, will mark the centennial birthday of Mr. Johnny Lombardi. He was born in the heart of downtown Toronto in 1915. Son of Italian immigrants, his father actually was born in Pisticci, the same southern small town my mother comes from. Johnny became a self-taught trumpeter and entertainer before serving in the Canadian Army in the Second World War.

After that war, a vast wave of Italian immigrants flocked to Canada, and Johnny, a man of quick insight, realized that these new immigrants surely missed their food and their culture. He opened a grocery store. He started to produce a radio show. He began bringing singers over from Italy. He then applied for a multi-cultural radio station, and CHIN Radio was born, above the supermarket.

Johnny quickly became successful, and soon his radio station began broadcasting programs in 30 different languages. Mr. Speaker, I first met Johnny Lombardi in the late 1970s. He had offered me a summer job as a radio host.

When he died in 2009, the Globe and Mail wrote, "He was adamant in his conviction that everyone in the world belonged here too, in the heart of the open city, and he made it his life's business to make a big place for them."

"Fa na bonna jobba," he would say. "Do a good job."

Happy birthday, Johnny. We miss you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Molto bene. That ends our members' statements.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL POLICY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Social Policy and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): Your committee begs to report the following bills, as amended:

Bill 12, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities / Projet de loi 12, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes

d'emploi en ce qui concerne les pourboires et autres gratifications;

Bill 33, An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches / Projet de loi 33, Loi visant à réduire l'abus de timbres de fentanyl,

The title of which is amended to read:

Bill 33, An Act to reduce the abuse of fentanyl patches and other controlled substance patches / Projet de loi 33, Loi visant à réduire l'abus de timbres de fentanyl et d'autres timbres de substances désignées;

Bill 117, An Act to amend the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007 with respect to notices of critical injury or death / Projet de loi 117, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur l'intervenant provincial en faveur des enfants et des jeunes en ce qui concerne les avis de décès ou de blessures graves,

The title of which is amended to read:

Bill 117, An Act to amend the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth Act, 2007 with respect to notices of serious bodily harm or death / Projet de loi 117, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur l'intervenant provincial en faveur des enfants et des jeunes en ce qui concerne les avis de décès ou de blessures graves;

Bill 141, An Act to require research to be undertaken and programs to be developed for pregnancy loss and infant death and to proclaim October 15 as Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day / Projet de loi 141, Loi exigeant des recherches et des programmes sur les pertes de grossesse et les décès néonataux et proclamant le 15 octobre Journée de sensibilisation au deuil périnatal.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The bills are therefore ordered for third reading.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MINING AMENDMENT ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MINES

Mr. Gravelle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 155, An Act to amend the Mining Act / Projet de loi 155, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mines.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the minister for a brief statement.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Today, we are introducing amending legislation that, if passed, would continue our Mining Act modernization process.

These proposed amendments would significantly modernize how claims are registered and managed in Ontario by implementing an online registration system

for mining claims, as well as a modernized electronic mining lands administration system.

If implemented, the changes would enhance Ontario's global competitiveness in the mining sector, encouraging prospecting, claim registration and exploration, which are key to the development of new mines.

I've got a bunch of people who were very crucial in making this happen, who I'm going to try to introduce in a point of order later. I welcome members of our ministry here as well today.

1520

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I believe we have unanimous content to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I move that the requirement for notice be waived for ballot item number 10 in the order of precedence for private members' public business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

VISITORS

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I recognize the Minister of Northern Development and Mines on a point of order.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Thank you very much for indulging me, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't here for introduction of guests. We have a number of people from our ministry, from a variety of the branches that are crucial to the legislation that I just introduced moments ago, and I want to acknowledge them and recognize them. I won't do it in any particular order. We've got great, committed public servants Roy Denomme, Omer Omerdin, Catherine Wyatt, Mike Mercer, Ken Steele, Grace Lo and Michelle Watkins. Welcome. You're amazing people.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): That's not a point of order. However, we do acknowledge our guests, and I'm grateful that you took the time to introduce your guests to the Legislature.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition that's signed by a great many people in my riding and the ridings

surrounding it. It's a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

Thank you very much for allowing me to present this petition, as I agree with it.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mrs. Cristina Martins: I have a petition that's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

"Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

"Whereas dental decay is the second-most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

"Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentrations; and

"Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the ministries of the government of Ontario adopt the number one recommendation made by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health in a 2012 report on oral health in Ontario, and amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario."

I agree with this petition, will affix my name and send it to the table with page Ben.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario government’s proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan (ORPP) is a mandatory pension plan which would target small businesses and their employees; and

“Whereas there has been little to no discussion on what the costs would be, or who would pay them; and

“Whereas affected businesses would be hit with up to \$1,643 per employee, per year in new payroll taxes starting in 2017; and

“Whereas affected employees would have up to \$1,643 per year extra deducted from their paycheques, and it would take 40 years for them to see the full pension benefits; and

“Whereas the Canadian Federation of Independent Business predicts the unemployment rate in Ontario would rise by 0.5%, and there would be a reduction in wages over the longer term; and

“Whereas all of these costs would be shouldered exclusively by small businesses and their employees; and

“Whereas public sector and big business employees who already have a pension plan will not be asked to pay into the plan;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To not support the implementation of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.”

I agree with this and will be passing it off to Ajay.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, *Your Lungs, Your Life*, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s private member’s bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to sign this petition with which I agree, and give it to page Jack.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition presented by a group in my riding called OPAL, Oxford People Against the Landfill. I’ve presented this petition a number of times before, but the signatures keep coming in.

It is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the rightful purpose of Ontario’s Environmental Protection Act ... is to ‘provide for the protection and conservation of the natural environment.’ RSO 1990, c. E.19, s. 3.; and

“Whereas ‘all landfills will eventually release leachate to the surrounding environment and therefore all landfills will have some impact on the water quality of the local ecosystem.’—Threats to Sources of Drinking Water and Aquatic Health in Canada;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That section 27 of the EPA should be reviewed and amended immediately to prohibit the establishment of new or expanded landfills at fractured bedrock sites and other hydrogeologically unsuitable locations within the province of Ontario.”

1530

First of all, I thank them for sending me this petition, and I affix my signature, as I agree with it.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the provincial government has cancelled the Northlander passenger train which served the residents of northeastern Ontario; and

“Whereas the provincial government has closed bus stations and is cancelling bus routes despite promising enhanced bus services to replace the train; and

“Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission ... has been given a mandate that its motor coach division must be self-sustaining; and

“Whereas Metrolinx, the crown corporation that provides train and bus service in the GTA ... is subsidized by more than \$100 million annually; and

“Whereas the subsidy to Metrolinx has increased annually for the last seven years;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To direct the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to reverse the decision to cancel bus routes immediately and to treat northerners equitably in decisions regarding public transportation.”

I wholeheartedly agree and give it to page Ajay.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

“Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

“Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients’ access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario’s doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario’s families deserve.”

I agree with this and will be passing it off to the page.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have a petition that is signed by Madame Jacqueline Ethier, who is from Chelmsford, in my riding. It reads as follows:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of ... price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with ... price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask my good page, Aaran, to bring it to the Clerk.

LUNG HEALTH

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths ... lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s private member’s bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with this petition and affix my signature to it.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to stop the sale of Hydro One.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the decision to sell was made without public input and the sale will be done in complete secrecy. The

government of Ontario is selling Ontario's largest utility behind closed doors; and

"Whereas if the people of Ontario lose majority ownership of Hydro One, ratepayers will be forced to accept whatever changes the new owners decide, such as higher rates; and

"Whereas the public will never again have independent investigations of consumer complaints, such as the Ombudsman's report on Hydro One's billing practices;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario must immediately put an end to the sale of Hydro One, and ensure it remains in the hands of the public."

I support this petition, affix my name to it, and give it to page Rachael to take to the table.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Mr. Wayne Gates: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Privatizing Hydro One: Another Wrong Choice.

"Whereas once you privatize hydro, there's no return; and

"We'll lose billions in reliable annual revenues for schools and hospitals; and

"We'll lose our biggest economic asset and control over our energy future; and

"We'll pay higher and higher hydro bills just like what's happened elsewhere;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To stop the sale of Hydro One and make sure Ontario families benefit from owning Hydro One now and for generations to come."

I sign my name to it and give it to page Michelle.

LUNG HEALTH

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to

make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

I support this and I will sign it and send it to the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT ACTION PLAN ACT (SUPPORTING SURVIVORS AND CHALLENGING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT), 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE PLAN D'ACTION CONTRE LA VIOLENCE ET LE HARCELEMENT SEXUELS (EN SOUTIEN AUX SURVIVANTS ET EN OPPOSITION À LA VIOLENCE ET AU HARCELEMENT SEXUELS)

Ms. MacCharles moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters / Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la violence sexuelle, le harcèlement sexuel, la violence familiale et des questions connexes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the minister for the leadoff.

1540

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'll be sharing my time with the member from Brampton-Springdale, the parliamentary assistant to me on the women's issues file. I'm very pleased to rise today to speak on the proposed Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act.

If passed, this legislation would support the rights of all Ontarians to feel safe and be safe from sexual violence and harassment in their homes, campuses, workplaces and communities. The proposed legislation would amend six existing acts, fulfilling commitments made in It's Never Okay, Ontario's sexual violence and harassment action plan, as released in March of this year. The action plan and this act, if passed, would work together in complementary purposes to strengthen supports for survivors with the overarching goal of ending sexual violence and harassment.

Ending sexual violence and harassment is an urgent priority for our society. One out of every three women

will experience some form of sexual assault in her lifetime; 28% of Canadians say they've been the target of unwelcome sexual advances at work. They've had requests for sexual favours or sexually charged talk while on the job. Countless Ontarians, irrespective of age, gender, faith, culture, income or community, have experienced sexual violence and harassment while simply going about their day-to-day lives. This is not okay; it is never okay.

Like so many Ontarians, our government has been shocked by the persistence of misogyny, gender violence and rape culture, and the attitudes and behaviours that support them. As a result, our government renewed its commitment to fighting sexual violence and harassment. We developed a three-year, \$41-million action plan with the advice and input from diverse communities, advocates, professionals and front-line workers who support survivors, from the courageous survivors themselves and so many others. Our plan involves changing attitudes and raising public awareness, improving support to survivors and making workplaces and campuses safer and more responsive to complaints about sexual violence and harassment.

Over the past several months, implementation of the plan and its commitments has begun. Together with our partners, we've made important progress. The member from Brampton-Springdale, Harinder Malhi, will speak to this progress later in her time.

It's my own privilege to speak to one specific commitment contained in the action plan: our government's promise to introduce legislation to strengthen provisions related to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace, on campus, in housing and through the civil claims process, which we have done and are debating here today.

As mentioned, the proposed legislation, if passed, would amend six existing acts, putting the strength of law behind important ways and means of helping to stop sexual violence and harassment in Ontario and improving support for survivors. The government's goal of protecting all Ontarians from sexual violence, sexual harassment and domestic violence is enshrined in the preamble to the act. The proposed legislation, if passed, would achieve this goal in five ways.

First: better protection in the workplace. Every Ontarian deserves the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. Sexual violence and harassment in the workplace turns that feeling of workplace safety on its head and upside down. They can undermine a person's dignity, undermine their health, compromise the ability to do one's job and potentially limit career opportunities and put their livelihood at risk. Statistics show that four in five people who experience unwanted sexual advances on the job do not report this behaviour to their employers.

If passed, our legislation would make workplaces safer by the amending the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Currently, this act requires employers to have a workplace harassment policy and program, and to provide information to workers about the content of that policy

and program. Our proposed amendments would include a definition of workplace sexual harassment; enhanced requirements regarding workplace harassment programs; and specific new employer duties to protect workers from harassment, including sexual harassment, in the workplace, and including the duty to ensure that incidents and complaints are appropriately investigated. Employees across Ontario should experience no form of harassment—sexual or otherwise—in the workplace at all.

Second: safer campuses. For most students, university or college is a wonderful milestone in their life. It's a unique time: a time of fulfillment, of learning and growing. But campus life can, unfortunately, involve navigating attitudes and behaviours that support rape culture, or surviving an experience of sexual assault or harassment. It's also a fact that sexual assault victimization rates are five times higher for women under the age of 35.

Ontario's post-secondary institutions and students are actively working to ensure that campuses are safer and that campus life is a respectful and positive time in students' lives. Our proposed legislation supports their good work. It would amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and the Private Career Colleges Act so that every publicly assisted college, university and private career college in Ontario would be required to have a standalone policy. That policy would specifically and solely address sexual violence affecting students, and be developed with student input and reviewed with student input every three years.

Colleges, universities and private career colleges would be required to report to the minister and/or superintendent on incidences of sexual violence, as well as on initiatives to address sexual violence and their effectiveness. The proposed amendments are intended to ensure that colleges, universities and private career colleges are more responsive to incidents of sexual violence. This includes training staff who will administer the policy, setting procedures that clearly indicate the point of contact and the process for reporting incidents, and providing the appropriate accommodations.

Institutions must ensure that the process is survivor-centred and easy to navigate, so that those who experience sexual violence have access to the information they need.

Public reporting of sexual violence data for each institution is projected to begin in the spring of 2017.

Third, we are removing the limitation period for all civil proceedings based on sexual assault and, in certain cases, sexual misconduct or assault, so that survivors can bring their civil claims forward whenever they choose to do so. Our proposed approach would make Ontario the Canadian jurisdiction with the broadest set of expectations to its general limitations law for claims based on sexual assault, sexual misconduct and certain non-sexual assaults.

Speaker, time does not heal all wounds, but time does give some survivors the perspective and distance they need to decide whether they want to confront their

perpetrators in civil proceedings or not. Bill 132 would aid this process of discernment by removing the limitation period, so that survivors can bring their civil claims forward at a time of their choosing.

Fourth, Bill 132 would, if passed, eliminate the two-year limitation period for survivors of sexual and domestic violence to make a compensation application to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board. Again, we believe that time should be on the side of survivors, not their perpetrators. The proposed new “no limitation period” rule would apply to all applications for compensation resulting from crimes relating to sexual or domestic violence, regardless of when that crime occurred.

Finally, Bill 132, if passed, would shorten the time it takes to end a tenancy agreement for people experiencing sexual or domestic violence, to make it easier for survivors to flee abuse. Currently, a tenant must provide at least 60 days’ notice to terminate most tenancies, and if there’s a lease, the termination date cannot be earlier than the last day of the lease period; that is, at the end of the lease.

If the proposed amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act are passed, survivors would be able to use a special notice provision that would allow them to end the tenancy within 28 days. This would relieve them of any rent obligations after that point. A tenant would need to provide at least 28 days’ notice and provide either a court order, such as a peace bond or restraining order, or just a signed and dated statement attesting that they and/or a child residing in the unit have experienced domestic or sexual violence.

In order to keep survivors safe after they have filed notice, landlords would be required to keep the notice, accompanying documentation and any details about it completely confidential, except in very limited circumstances as outlined in the proposed act. During the notice period, the landlord would not be able to disclose the notice to anyone, including co-tenants, until after the tenant has left. In addition, landlords would not be able to share any information that was in the notice or accompanying documentation.

In general, landlords would not be permitted to report information to police, immigration or child welfare, except in certain necessary situations; for example, if the documentation is required by police for an ongoing investigation.

1550

To deter misuse of the special notice provision and landlords from breaching any tenant confidentiality, offence provisions are being proposed in the amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act.

If a landlord suspects that a tenant is misusing a special notice provision or provided false information, the landlord can file a complaint with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing’s investigation and enforcement unit.

If a landlord breaches the tenant’s confidentiality, the tenant would be able to report the landlord to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing’s investigation

and enforcement unit and/or file an application with the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Speaker, to conclude, Bill 132 offers safer workplaces, homes and campuses and strong legal protections for survivors. We need this bill as one of many measures to end sexual violence and harassment.

Last December, the Premier committed to taking swift action on sexual violence and harassment, which saw fruition the following March with the release of It’s Never Okay, our plan to end sexual violence and harassment. This progress continues today in this House with the opening of second reading on Bill 132.

Our journey does have a destination, Speaker, and it’s the absolute elimination of sexual violence and harassment from Ontario. We are galvanizing an entire society into long-overdue social change and progress. We can do this. We can make Ontario safe from sexual violence and harassment. We can do it by moving forward as one to our goal of an Ontario that is safe for all.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Continuing in debate, I recognize the member from Brampton–Springdale.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: I’m pleased to rise today to support Minister MacCharles on second reading of Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015.

The minister has told us what is in the proposed bill and how it would help all Ontarians be safe from sexual violence and harassment.

As my contribution to this important debate, I want to look at the forces for change that brought forward our government’s action plan, last spring, to end sexual violence and harassment.

Last December 4, Premier Wynne called for the development of an action plan and announced a package of initiatives to raise awareness of sexual violence and harassment, enhance prevention programs to combat sexual violence and harassment, and further improve support for survivors.

At the same time, Premier Wynne also asked all ministers to explore ways to further improve support for survivors of sexual violence and harassment. She directed specific ministers to bring forward options that related to the criminal justice system, policing, health care, education, post-secondary campuses and Ontario workplaces.

The Premier also asked Minister MacCharles to build on the work of the Ontario Women’s Directorate by convening a permanent stakeholder round table on violence against women. This round table is now established and provides advice to the government on continuing and emerging gender-based violence issues. Work began immediately in all of those areas, and the result was our three-year, \$41-million Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment, which the Premier and Minister MacCharles launched on March 6 this year, two days before International Women’s Day.

This plan, called It’s Never Okay, is a mix of short- and long-term initiatives that build on the previous four-year Sexual Violence Action Plan that was developed by

the Ontario Women's Directorate and launched in 2011. The first plan was making progress, but after the high-profile events of last fall, there was an obvious need to step up the measures being taken against violent and misogynistic behaviour.

The proposed legislation would, if passed, strengthen provisions related to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace, on campus, in housing and through the civil claim process. It also delivers on a commitment made in the action plan.

I can sum up the Action Plan to Stop Sexual Violence and Harassment in a general way by saying that we will help change deep-rooted attitudes and behaviours; we will provide more training for professionals in many sectors to provide better support for survivors; we will improve supports for survivors who come forward about abuse; and we will make workplaces and campuses safer and more responsive to complaints.

Speaker, since the action plan was launched this past March, the focus has moved from introduction to implementation. This can be seen in several initiatives implemented since the launch.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is investing more than \$1.1 million a year for the next three years in hospital-based sexual assault and domestic violence treatment centres. The investment will enhance specialized counselling services and community outreach support for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence.

The Ministry of the Attorney General is providing an additional \$1.7 million per year in funding for the province's 42 sexual assault centres so that they can enhance their services for the survivors.

To underscore the importance of student safety and learning, the government announced \$2.4 million in funding to support seven public education projects across Ontario's education sectors. This funding includes five public education projects that specifically target campuses.

One of the goals of our action plan is to engage Ontarians in the discussion on how to stop sexual violence and harassment by encouraging them to undertake initiatives that would help to change attitudes and inspire behavioural change. To that end, Ontario has launched a \$2.25-million Creative Engagement Fund. Administered by the Ontario Arts Council, the Creative Engagement Fund will support artists in provoking dialogue and action on issues such as sexual consent, rape culture and misogyny. The artistic projects may use any type of creative expression, including music, writing, photography, theatre, videos, including online work, and traditional aboriginal arts.

We also launched a three-year, \$3-million innovation fund to test new approaches to improving supports to survivors of sexual violence and harassment.

Speaker, we know that we cannot stop sexual violence and harassment overnight. We know that it will take a generational shift to end deep-rooted attitudes and behaviours. That's why another key part of Ontario's

action plan is an updated health and physical education curriculum. This enhanced curriculum will help students to gain a deeper understanding of a host of important issues, including gender equality, healthy, equal relationships and consent.

A part of our action plan is a powerful public education campaign aimed at young people aged 18 to 29. The first phase of this multimedia, multilingual campaign was launched in March on the same day as the action plan. It was entitled *It's Never Okay*.

The campaign was built around the Twitter hashtag #WhoWillYouHelp and was aimed at bystanders who witness sexual violence or harassment, urging them to come forward to help survivors. Although the campaign is aimed at youth, the universal message is that we all have a role to play in ending gender-based violence. That includes you and that includes me.

You may have seen parts of this public awareness campaign, and if you saw the powerful television advertisement, it may have made you uncomfortable. It was meant to. So far, the TV ad has had well over two and a half million views on YouTube, and that's just in English.

Altogether, our Twitter hashtag #WhoWillYouHelp has reached more than 85 million people, not only in Ontario but around the world.

In September, with the beginning of the new academic year, we continued to roll out advertisements aimed at younger adults. During frosh week on university and college campuses across the province, first-year students received coloured highlighters with the #WhoWillYouHelp hashtag.

Once again aimed at bystanders, print ads with the hashtag ran on and off campuses, in pubs, at nearby bars and even in the campus bathroom stalls.

We often speak about women as the main victims of sexual violence and harassment. Although that is true, we also recognize that anyone can be a victim. That's why several of the ads targeted both gay and straight students in a variety of situations in which sexual violence or harassment can take place.

Phase 2 of the public education campaign was launched by the Premier at the Summit on Sexual Violence and Harassment on November 19, once again with a thought-provoking video aimed at young adults aged 18 to 29. The new ad again can be uncomfortable to watch. It depicts behaviours that Ontarians may have trouble recognizing as sexual violence or harassment. These scenes show everything from sexual harassment on the job to so-called expected sexual favours following a date.

We commissioned a study by Ipsos Reid which showed that while most Ontarians believe they have an obligation to intervene if they witness sexual violence, many Ontarians are still unsure whether certain behaviours constitute sexual violence and harassment. These grey areas are a barrier to bystander intervention.

For example, one in three Ontarians do not always believe that if someone sends along nude pictures of

someone they know to a friend, it constitutes sexual violence and assault. Three in 10 Ontarians do not always believe that if someone is physically active with another person who is very intoxicated and passing out, it constitutes sexual violence and assault. When asked if a person spreading rumours about someone's sexuality constitutes harassment, one in four Ontarians believe that this sometimes constitutes harassment, and 7% think that it never does.

1600

It's apparent that we all have work to do to change the long-held misconceptions and attitudes about what constitutes sexual violence and harassment. This ad campaign aims to help Ontarians identify sexual violence and harassment when it happens, so that they are able to step in and help.

The Twitter hashtag for the new part of the public education campaign is #ItsNeverOkay, because, Speaker, it's never okay that one in three women will experience sexual violence in her lifetime; it's never okay that 460,000 sexual assaults take place in Canada every year; and it's never okay that for every 1,000 sexual assaults, only 33 are reported to the police, only 12 of those result in charges laid, only six are prosecuted and just three lead to a conviction.

All of us here today know that gendered violence is never okay, and I'm confident that with second reading today of Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015, Ontario is taking a huge step towards stopping gendered violence in our province.

There is still a tremendous amount of work to do, but I am confident that we're taking another giant step towards the vision of an Ontario often articulated by Premier Wynne and Minister MacCharles, where all people can live without fear, in safety, with dignity and respect. I call on all Ontarians to play a role and help make change happen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: It's with great pride that I rise to comment on the speakers today.

I want to thank our member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock who really pushed for the committee that was able to go around the province and hear from some of the laypeople who have been experiencing many, many sad cases of harassment and sexual assault. We're in a day and age where those things can't be tolerated anymore. So I'm glad to see that action was finally taken, and we're seeing some firm steps moving ahead.

Of course, it's one thing to change the law, but it's attitudes that must change, and it's time that we see those changes back throughout all our elements of society. People should not—regardless of sex, religious background or anything—be intimidated and harassed. We've seen that for far too long.

We're looking forward to the passing of this bill. More work will need to be done, but more work needs to be done by the citizens of this province to make sure that

this type of issue is in the past. It's gone on for far too long, and we're looking forward to a day where everybody can look back and say that we made a difference here, and we've been able to stop this type of harassment and sexual assault.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's really important that we have this bill in front of this House. It's a topic that needs to be discussed in an open forum. We need to make sure that victims of sexual violence and harassment are heard, and that there are ways for them to bring their accusations forward in a way that there's going to be action taken. Having this legislation come forward is extremely important.

Sexual violence and harassment in the workplace—it is never okay, and so I do commend the government for taking action on this issue and putting out that video #ItsNeverOkay because that message has to be put out there time and time again so that women know their rights, and that whoever is the perpetrator of this workplace harassment or sexual violence, they know that it's never okay. We have to talk about it, we have to get the message out, we have to change the work culture and we have to change society's culture so that it's never okay to have this happen to someone. It's traumatizing. It ruins people's lives, it ruins people's livelihoods, and victims should have the right and the path to file these complaints and get satisfaction.

I commend the government for bringing this forward. I know our critic is going to be debating this bill for an hour doing her lead and I look forward to hearing her insight on this. She has done a lot of work with this government in participating and research on it, so I'm excited to hear what she has to say on this bill.

Thank for you for the time to speak to this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's a real pleasure today to be able to stand on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge and add my support for Bill 132. I had the privilege of having been appointed to the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, and our final report will be tabled next week. Today, I'd like to acknowledge several members of the House in the opposition who have helped to work on this important initiative.

In saying that, I also know how hard the minister responsible for women's issues and her team have worked in concurrent terms to produce the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act today, Bill 132. I know that we're all in support, and I just want to acknowledge the hard work that has been going on for that.

This past Monday, I made my acting debut at the Dunfield Theatre in Cambridge. We were presenting a fundraising play speaking the words of women who have experienced violence at home in front of an audience of 400 people. Interestingly, some of the women's words that we were speaking dealt with the impact that sexual

violence had on their lives. It was a very moving experience. It was in support of the Haven House rebuild, which is our women's shelter there.

What was interesting to me is that it really does tie in very nicely with our government's proposal and the proposed amendments that would make it easier for tenants to be able break their lease if they and their children experience sexual or domestic violence. I wanted to thank the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, who had done a private member's bill a while back on this. I'm really glad to see that it's in this bill.

So I really do support the amendment in this bill that will ensure that the Residential Tenancies Act will be amended so that a tenant will be able to break her lease.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise to provide a few comments on Bill 132. I think there's some good stuff in here. I have no qualms with schedule 6, the Residential Tenancies Act. The member who spoke before is absolutely correct: There was a private member's bill from the member from Ottawa Centre that we debated two legislative sessions ago, so it's nice to see it finally coming forward in a government proposal. I think we could have dealt with it sooner if we had passed the private member's bill, but I'll leave it at that.

The only concern that I have is that this is by no means a complete improvement. There is a lot more that needs to be done. I guess, to be fair, I wish that we could have actually had the time to have the report of the select committee—which is being tabled on December 10—to let the minister see what the all-party select committee did and make some decisions and make some amendments based on that. I would hate to think that we went through an exercise where we had support from all three political parties represented in the Ontario Legislature—it's almost as though the government wants to pre-empt what the select committee is doing.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: No, no.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I hear the minister saying, "No, no," and I'm pleased to hear that. That gives me some comfort, because it would disturb me that we let a process that is so valuable—the select committee—proceed and then basically co-opt it, or the government co-opts it, by trying to proactively bring forward things.

1610

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member for Brampton–Springdale for final comments.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: First, I want to thank Minister MacCharles for bringing forward Bill 132. I also want to thank all of my colleagues who spoke today. To the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, thank you for supporting our call to bystanders. To the member from London–Fanshawe, it's very important that we recognize that, "It's never okay," and that you're supporting our hashtag. To the member from Cambridge, thank you for your dedication and passion through the work we did

together on the select committee. To the member from Dufferin–Caledon, I want to say thank you for all your hard work on the select committee as well. We are always willing to take that advice, and we know that the select committee is coming forward with a report.

I do believe that what we've done here today and the legislation we have now introduced is a step in the right direction. We are not devaluing the work of the select committee. Being part of the select committee, I completely understand how important it was and how hard we all worked. We want to take the experiences that we saw from the people during the deputations and use those experiences in making an informed decision as we move forward. I'm sure the minister, myself, the ministry and OWD will continue to use the advice and recommendations that we will be tabling next week. I want to assure you that we are open to that idea, and that we'll continue to go forward.

On another note, we do appreciate your support, and we do appreciate that we can all agree in this House today that this is a step in the right direction. We are moving forward on an issue that was under the light and bringing light to it. We're giving it the importance it needs, and we're going to continue to do the work that is going to help survivors.

Thank you all for speaking to Bill 132, and we look forward to taking this forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm happy to rise today to speak on Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters, and respond to the Premier's It's Never Okay action plan.

I'll just say up front that I'm going to be sharing my time with my colleague the member from Dufferin–Caledon.

The proposed bill amends five acts—current legislation—and does a lot to combat sexual violence and harassment in Ontario. We do have a lot of suggestions to improve it, and I was very happy to hear the government say that they are looking forward to the select committee's recommendations and to some more input from all parties in the Legislature and the public, actually, and maybe doing more to protect victims and survivors of sexual violence and harassment in our province.

The It's Never Okay campaign was released in March, and is the main reason why the bill is here. It is committed to raising awareness, enhance prevention and improve supports for survivors through various initiatives. I'm going to be fairly technical in my remarks on the record, if I could, so that some of our suggestions will be well documented.

There are 13 main provisions within the bill and the action plan dealing with the important concerns that survivors and community service workers have expressed to the government. Moreover, the provisions also reflect similar concerns we heard on the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment.

It's important to note how many of these provisions have already been enacted through previous legislation or initiatives, and how many of these provisions have been left out. That's where we're going to fill in some of the gaps. This bill specifically addresses five of the 13 provisions, and does provide a good basis for further work to support survivors and victims of sexual violence and harassment.

It amends the Limitations Act, 2002, removing the limitation period for all civil proceedings based on sexual assault or sexual misconduct, so that victims, both adults and minors, can submit claims when they are comfortable. Survivors will no longer run out of time, based on the statute of limitations, before they can even bring their claims to court. We've certainly heard that it is a very difficult thing to come forward, and sometimes it takes decades.

The proposed amendment to the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act will remove the current two-year limitation period for survivors of sexual and domestic violence to make compensation applications.

I certainly agree with both of those amendments. It just basically gives survivors an appropriate time to bring their cases to court and receive compensation and the justice they deserve. We've certainly heard that at the select committee many, many times.

Furthermore, the bill also amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act in order to further combat sexual violence and harassment as it exists in the workplace. The new amendments will include a definition of sexual harassment. This is certainly a welcomed amendment as, previously, sexual harassment claims in the workplace would only be under workplace harassment definitions that were neither explicit nor specific.

The bill will also amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, which my colleague from Cambridge mentioned a few minutes ago. A constructive addition to what is already written in this bill would be enhanced training for landlords and landladies so that they are adequately prepared to deal with these sensitive situations. If they're not properly trained, landlords can expose the victims and/or survivors to more harm. For example, if they do not properly protect the confidentiality of the victim's information or if they inform the abusive partner that the victim intends to leave—just things that they would do accidentally, and certainly not maliciously or intentionally.

The proposed amendments to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 are going to ensure that all colleges, universities and private career colleges will create and implement stand-alone policies that address sexual violence. Many of us have heard about the many problems that campuses have in regard to sexual harassment and violence against, mostly, young women who have left home for the first time in order to receive a higher education. I would also hope that, in order to properly protect these young people, proper regulations are put in place that are specific and strict enough to ensure that the

policies are created by the over 50 colleges, universities and career colleges.

It's important to realize that this legislation does not implement four of the recommendations of the action plan that was proposed by the government in March. I'll be referencing that in my remarks also. There's a report done by the Kawartha Sexual Assault Centre, which is a catchment for part of my riding, called *Lessons from Behind the Door*. The Kawartha Sexual Assault Centre partnered with the Elizabeth Fry Society of Peterborough and the Trent Community Research Centre to conduct some detailed and ambitious research for their two-year project.

A provision to develop up-to-date training for front-line workers in the health, community services, education and justice sectors to better support survivors and to develop training for workers in the hospitality sector to empower them—we heard this in committee too—to know how to help when they encounter high-risk situations: The group noted that due to the complex nature of the needs of many survivors of sexual violence or harassment, many deal with a lack of understanding from organizations of their complex needs, whether they have intersecting needs for help with their sexual trauma and other emergency health needs as well as other mental health needs.

Survivors and service providers discussed the insensitivity from those in the justice sector at times. There clearly needs to be more training done to ensure that those in the community services and justice sector and elsewhere have the appropriate training in order to refer survivors to appropriate services to help them with their complex needs. In addition, more training would help workers who have first contact with these survivors to be able to respond in constructive ways that do not lead to further retraumatization of these survivors—again, a lot of education and awareness.

Community services, health workers and workers in the justice sector work in their fields in order to serve the public. These workers cannot properly do their work if they're not given the appropriate training to ensure that they are given the proper skills to help those in need.

An initiative to develop tools and identify best practices to support a compassionate and sensitive response from law enforcement authorities to encourage more survivors to report sexual assaults: This report spoke about the need for such tools and best practices in law enforcement. We all understand that law enforcement officers do their work in order to help the public, but in many cases, as is true with health workers and community service workers, they are simply not provided with the appropriate skills to allow them to succeed with all their interactions with members of the public, especially survivors of sexual violence and harassment. It is imperative that we act on this type of recommendation in order to allow justice to occur, but we have to have proper supports in place to ensure that law enforcement can provide compassion and sensitive responses to sexual violence and harassment, or else it could lead to even further trauma for the survivors of such instances.

1620

An initiative to increase supports and develop an enhanced prosecution model to improve the experience of survivors navigating the criminal justice system: Removing the limitations is helpful to survivors, for sure, when reporting these crimes, but more needs to be done to support survivors during the legal process.

An initiative to create a pilot program to provide free independent legal advice to sexual assault survivors whose cases are proceeding toward a criminal trial: Again, anything that will make it easier for victims and survivors of sexual violence and harassment to use the legal system in order to seek out justice is something that the government should commit to doing.

I know that there are going to be some recommendations from the select committee, which we can't tell you about yet, that are going to provide some other avenues. Anyway, I don't want to get off-track from the bill.

The legal system is complicated and hard to understand, and we need to do a better job to make the system easier to navigate and help survivors and encourage them. If they choose to go the justice route, it should be as non-stressful as possible. Such free advice is going to help with that. It is quite an obstacle right at the moment for these, mostly, women to go through.

I've brought up many times in the Legislature the terrible murders in Renfrew county. We were all, of course, very upset, but they also highlighted some problems that are in the system that we need to change.

I want to speak just a little bit about the Partner Assault Response Program, which I'm sure my colleague from the NDP is also going to be addressing in her remarks.

The lack of monitoring of dangerous offenders and problems with the government's handling of dangerous offenders and those who do not sign their probation orders—red flags go up that they certainly are not going to adhere, and we need to do a better job, in this case, of protecting the women in the province.

Recommendations from the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee—it's a very long name. They made some recommendations to the government a few years ago that we'd like to see implemented.

The Auditor General's report on parole and probation officers, as well as other recommendations, would certainly help to improve the bill and protect all Ontarians.

The report investigated the theme of "access to community-based services in the prevention of and response to sexual violence against women and girls"; and this is, again, just one of my local reports, but it is very succinct with a lot of what we heard. It is saying that the research project which was done by the city and county of Peterborough—so we bring in a rural and urban component here—included looking at the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats—a SWOT analysis, as it is known—by community service leaders, 18 focus groups of service providers representing social sectors who have interaction with girls and women at risk, 28 survivor interviews, and an online survey that was completed by 96 women.

The results are overarching, and again—this is somewhat addressed in the action plan—we can, I think, help the government with this legislation in protecting our victims who are in society.

The complexity of victimization is connected to cycles of generational and peer-to-peer violence. This theme relates to many things. Many survivors, for example, experience a family history of violence and peer violence, which then shows that there can be generational trauma. Also, there is often confusion among Ontarians about what is appropriate in relationships. The research found that this confusion could lead to abuse related to consent, coercion and sexual assault. Another important intersection deals with the significant overlap between these experiences of sexual violence and domestic violence not recognized by survivors, agencies, law enforcement and other third parties. More organizations need to explore collaborative approaches to address these issues. There were some best practices, again, that we heard as we travelled the province and here in Toronto—great community groups working with government agencies to address some of these issues. So we have some best practices and then we saw a lot of gaps in the system also.

There's also a need for friends, family and community members to provide support to survivors and not re-traumatize through victim blaming and shaming. And there's a need for the community to understand and respond appropriately to sexual violence and violence against sexuality and/or gender expression.

For our indigenous women and girls, there's systemic problems that impact how the region tries to restore and heal these families and communities. There is a lot to do in this area in order to help these survivors. Again, we saw some best practices as we travelled the province that we can share with other areas of the province too.

Social media and the digital world significantly influence Peterborough and area's culture; I think that's a true snapshot across the province. There are many young adults who are very active on social media and through social apps. Social media can perpetuate sexual violence and harassment if it uses the language of rape culture, which promotes female sexualization and misogynistic practices. I know that the minister spoke of the need to change the culture in the province. Again, women can often be talked about as sexual objects instead of as people.

The use of hook-up apps such as Tinder and some dating websites "have been implicated as an entry point for sexually violent crimes", not only in my local area but in Ontario. We want to make sure these apps, social media and the Internet are not used in these ways. It's very hard to monitor, but again, the awareness part that was addressed—*#WhoWillYouHelp*—is also very valuable. We heard positive comments about that as we travelled with the select committee.

We heard about cyber-related bullying and distribution of personal photos. It can be difficult for police to gather enough evidence of online issues in the social media world that we live in.

Finally, the way media can often report on sexual violence can impact whether or not survivors feel comfortable seeking support. It is important that the media encourages spaces that make it easy for survivors to come forward with their experience of abuse.

There are a lot of issues related to social media that are not touched on in this bill. I know, again, in the select committee—which I'll keep referring to, because when you do this for nine months, you hear a lot of testimony and hear a lot of good suggestions. It also highlighted a lot of problems I did not really understand fully.

It is difficult to deal with cultural opinions and social media. I know that the Legislature itself and the MPPs will keep that in mind as we go into further readings of the bill, discuss further options, and make the bill better for survivors and better for Ontarians.

Disclosure of sexual violence that occurs when there's a trusting relationship in place: A great concern for survivors is whether or not anyone will believe them. This is simply not acceptable. The idea that a survivor is not telling the truth is reinforced through, sometimes, the media, television and community-wide victim shaming, according to this report. Again, this is a template, but it's replicated throughout the province. The justice system has to ask if a claim is legitimate, but we as Ontarians need to realize and recognize the struggles and fears of survivors.

It's also very common for survivors to disclose past experiences of sexual violence versus recent acts. This new legislation addresses the reality of removing the limitation period for civil proceedings, but service providers also need to keep this in mind.

It's also important that survivors have trusted service providers, their front-line contacts, who can help them. As often as possible, survivors would benefit from having continuity of care and appropriate referrals to help them navigate their trauma and the different support systems. The type of language that people often use when talking to survivors often impacts supportive relationships that might otherwise be helpful for the survivor. When a survivor talks about an occurrence of abuse and the listener simply brushes it off as a bad date, that can impact the survivor greatly.

1630

Again, this type of issue is difficult to address in legislation and it's difficult to address just in general when we talk. I know a lot of stories were hard to hear when we were at committee; and the researchers, who maybe aren't exposed to the harshness of things that we as elected officials are, did a great job in listening and summarizing for our select committee report. It is just overall a difficult issue to address.

Survivors can fear retelling their story to strangers or others, which they might have to do in order to properly get the use of the right services.

Finally, survivors may be dealing with multiple risk factors for sexual violence, such as ethnicity, mental health, sexuality or others, and they need to access community-based services that understand the inter-

sections of these complex factors in order to get the best services they can for these survivors.

These three themes that I've mentioned speak to these complicated issues in society that this bill may not be able to address in their entirety, because of how complex they are, but it is important for the House, I think, to understand these issues as we talk about this bill and make important improvements to it.

Changes in campus policy in schedule 5, with the amendments to the related acts—I hope that we'll see improvements, and I think we will, because the university and the college associations that appeared before us were more than willing to have a more accountable process within their campuses to protect the vulnerable within them.

I hope that this is going to help ensure some changes in social media. When you get to young people who mostly use social media—although I'm probably not young anymore, I've learned to use it quite a bit. The majority of young people use social media—and just how we treat women in Ontario, so that they're always respected in every aspect of their lives.

We also want to make sure that this bill makes it easier for the survivors to tell their experiences by providing training for first responders.

From these themes, Lessons from Behind the Door came up with 10 items in order to help. Ensuring there's community-wide disclosure response systems and community-based services navigation involving different agencies and different institutions: I have to say that some of the communities naturally are coming together and doing that, but we have to make sure that they have all the tools and the resources, and do more province-wide templates from best practices that we heard about as we travelled. I know that there's a permanent round table giving advice to the ministry also and it is ongoing. That is very helpful.

Community hubs are important to survivors; and interagency partnerships, which I mentioned. If the onus is put on the survivors to navigate all these services, they're going to feel lost within that bureaucracy. An example of a community hub that has a partnered approach is START, Support Team for Abuse Response Today, which is at the YWCA that serves my area. I'm sure that it's replicated in other areas. It offers safety planning, nursing assessment, medical information, family and criminal court information, admission to safe shelter, information about making a police report, counselling, child welfare support/advice, applying for social assistance, and it will refer women to agencies beyond the 14 partnered organizations as needed. That's a great example of an initiative that is out there as we help survivors navigate our complicated system.

Creating online hubs was another thing that I'd like to mention. We can hope that as we evolve, not just with legislation but in cultural changes, creating online hubs can help survivors, especially in rural areas like mine. I mentioned the study that was done in Peterborough, because it has a combination of rural and urban, and I

also mentioned the murders that occurred in Renfrew county. Again, rural areas have challenges in connecting with not only counselling, but also transportation options. I've brought up the number of probation officers for rural areas. It is a challenge, and I think that we have to take that into account.

Creating online hubs might be another venue that helps, and we can maybe look at incorporating that into the bill.

Partner with public educators for a coordinated prevention effort: no question, and we've spoken about this many times today.

Increasing the public's knowledge on sexual violence and harassment: Conversations about appropriate anti-violence language, healthy sexuality and relationships, among other things, can be led by the media and public educators, especially after particularly publicized incidents of violence against women come into the public eye. Educating Ontarians and shifting how our culture talks about women and sexual violence and harassment can change our society for the better in the long run.

Offer sexual-trauma-informed professional development specifically to service providers, educators and community supporters in sexual-trauma-informed care, disclosure response and bystander intervention. Again, the hashtag #WhoWillYouHelp, and the ads that came out originally—I've had very positive feedback, when we heard from the select committee—I thought were well done. Such training can improve the support that we give to survivors, which then improves their daily lives—no question.

It does take a long time. A lot has been said about post-traumatic syndrome with a lot of the survivors. I think that we have to collectively look at delivering services that are appropriate for these survivors.

I talked about the collaboration with community-based services—again, we all understand that police officers want to help as much as possible in these tragic situations, but sometimes they're not provided with correct training. Again, the bill does not provide any provisions for improved trauma-informed training for police services that would ensure that their responses to survivors are sensitive to their specific struggles. And I think that, as I have said before, we need to make sure that the bill accurately addresses the training needs for police forces across Ontario.

Develop a community-wide mandate for the positive space and workplace sexual violence and harassment training: The bill does have provisions that help ensure that instances of sexual violence or harassment at work are investigated to some extent. However, more could be done to prevent such incidents from happening in the first place. The bill gives us the opportunity to revisit our current mandates on sexual violence and harassment training, to ensure that all workplaces in Ontario are the safest in the country.

Preventive measures such as accurate training could ensure that there are fewer cases of sexual violence and harassment in Ontario.

Increase the capacity for families to access support for difficult conversations around sexual health, healthy relationships, sexuality and sexual violence: Having professional services to facilitate these difficult discussions, as is recommended in this report, would be helpful, to ensure that families have the proper resources so that they can provide the best support for their relatives. Instances of sexual violence and harassment, as I said, are very difficult, and this bill could ensure that the professional services are there for the extended family, to address the issues as best as possible.

Streamlining a response-team approach for victims of sexual violence, from initial contact with police through the court system: A response that would also include victim services, a victim-witness assistance program, and community-based counselling services would help survivors as they work through the justice system. This bill lacks a bit in addressing how survivors interact with the justice system. In addition, the bill could make sure that survivors have supportive and positive experiences through the justice system.

We heard some best practices as we toured with the committee. I'm more than willing to share that, when we're allowed to, on December 10, when it's tabled.

Building alternative, creative spaces for sexual violence survivors to access healing opportunities: We should look at this bill carefully as we try our best to ensure that the alternative spaces could be encouraged in legislation in any way possible.

These 10 actionable recommendations could provide some great insight into how this bill could be improved so that it better serves all Ontarians, whether you live in downtown, urban centres such as Toronto or rural areas, which I have in Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, and which a lot of the province has.

We're looking forward to providing some improvements to the bill.

1640

There are also some other aspects of the bill that I think are missing, which relate to police services and justice services. Police services should be supported for further training, as I have said, and there are many aspects to strengthening the justice system.

We should look at how the bill could improve how we deal with sexual violence and sexual harassment offenders in the future. Two of the problems that were brought to my attention, after the murders in Renfrew county occurred, were the lack of monitoring of dangerous offenders recommendations from the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee.

First of all, the PAR Program, which I know was discussed in question period in the Legislature today: This program is a psycho-educational course and counselling service for offenders, but it aims at helping them stop their violent, abusive and controlling behaviours toward partners. This is a court-mandated program. We've seen it change from 16 weeks to 12 weeks, we thought because there was a wait-list, but we're not quite sure that is why the program was changed. The member from

London West has mentioned before, and today—and we have both mentioned in the Legislature in the past few months—that many groups no longer can offer PAR because they believe the changes in the program will only put more women at risk instead of helping to protect them.

This bill is an opportunity for the government to revisit the court-mandated Partner Assault Response Program to help protect survivors. Hopefully, the government is listening to what we said about the PAR Program and will be making those changes.

Secondly, the lack of monitoring of high-risk offenders: We have, as of last year, only around 800 probation and parole officers to deal with over 51,200 offenders. It's a ratio that is not impressive, to say the least, but in the case of the murders of the three innocent women in Renfrew county, one single probation officer there for one day a week is overload; no question. He can't possibly manage that size of file, and certainly that was brought up by the chair of the local Community Policing Advisory Committee in Renfrew county.

The government has to have priorities. The safety of Ontarians is a big priority. We have brought through the suggestion of supporting probation and parole officers many times; rural areas especially have a lack of staff.

To prove the extreme nature of the problem, we can look at the high recidivism rates of offenders in Ontario. The reoffend rate for medium-risk offenders is 23.6%; for high-risk offenders, it's 42.7%; and for very high-risk offenders, it's 60.3%. For such high recidivism rates, we can't afford to use such a small amount of resources for these offenders, because it's clearly not working.

Assessment tools: As I've mentioned before, in order to appropriately flag high-risk repeat offenders, appropriately monitor them.

This bill would be improved by addressing these issues. Again, this is from the government's own recommendation from a review committee in 2012.

The report, I would say, could incorporate some of these changes that we'd like to see what happened, and it would strengthen the bill and strengthen protection for Ontarians. We saw it with the May-Iles Report that was done. Recommendations were also given to the minister, but they have yet to be acted on. It was proven that Mr. Iles was a dangerous man. He breached his probation and was let out. The consequences, of course, were that we didn't know his whereabouts, and he basically travelled across many jurisdictions freely before murdering his victim, Arlene May, and ending his own life.

There were recommendations that came to the government—the Ministry of Correctional Services—about that, and there was a private member's bill, Bill 130, introduced by my colleague the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—okay, I've run out of time here; I'm looking at the clock differently—that was brought forward.

I have some more recommendations that I'm going to bring up in my last two minutes. I'm going to let my colleague from Dufferin–Caledon have the floor now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I recognize the deputy leader of the official opposition and member for Dufferin–Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for agreeing to share some of her one-hour lead on this important legislation.

When discussing Bill 132, it's important to mention the work that the select committee has been doing since it was formed in February. First, I want to thank the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for spearheading this important issue and bringing forward the original motion that established the select committee.

Since March, the committee heard and received written submissions from over 145 individual survivors, family members, and health care and social service advocates for survivors. After the hearings, the committee tabled its interim report in the Legislature on June 24. I would encourage members who have not had the opportunity to read the interim report, because what it covers is a very effective and complete overview of what we heard from deponents, and put in, quite frankly, a very easy reading model, where the themes and the topics were grouped together. It's valuable if you want to look at the complete picture of what we are trying to deal with.

The interim report is comprised of various themes that we heard from individuals and organizations. Some of those themes included understanding sexual violence and harassment; aboriginal people and communities; the sex trade and human trafficking; the workplace; sexual abuse among children and youth; post-secondary institutions; the justice system; media, the Internet and new technology; prevention and education; and research and data collection.

One of the important points made by witnesses was that a broader definition of sexual violence and harassment should be established. Additionally, witnesses advocated for certain actions to be deemed a form of sexual violence and harassment, and to be divided into categories, including sexual assault, sexual abuse, domestic or intimate partner violence and sexual harassment.

Some individuals are, as we know, more vulnerable than others to sexual violence and harassment, including youth, aboriginals, new Canadians, individuals with special needs, the LGBTQ community and those living in poverty.

What we heard from one organization is that the issue of sexual violence and harassment is comparable to a public health epidemic. It is a systemic issue that unfortunately no one wants to admit even exists within our society. To understand how big an issue sexual violence and harassment is, just look at its economic impact. It's estimated that sexual assault and other forms of sexual offences cost our nation's economy \$4.8 billion every year. Additionally, spousal abuse costs our country's economy \$7.8 billion.

Not only does sexual violence and harassment have a profound effect on our economy, but of course it impacts our individual lives. Not only are there short-term nega-

tive impacts of experiencing sexual violence or harassment, but there are long-term negative impacts as well. Some witnesses explained that sexual violence can cause anxiety, depression, a higher chance of committing suicide, chronic illness, substance abuse; lead to eating disorders, and withdrawal from work and school; or cause post-traumatic stress disorder. The trauma that sexual violence and harassment can cause is so profound that it can leave victims feeling guilty for what happened, in addition to forcing many individuals from speaking out about their experience.

We need to ensure that we create a system and environment that encourages victims to speak out about their experience so that no one gets away with committing these acts. To create such a system, it is imperative that we understand what sexual violence and harassment is and what it can do so we can make others aware of it.

Another area I want to talk about, what we heard during the committee—and that the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock has been at the forefront of—is the issue of the sex trade and human trafficking. Human trafficking doesn't prey on those who are living in poverty. Rather, anyone—in fact, I'm going to speak as a mom now. I have two teenaged children. When the member started talking about opportunities for improvement and how we can solve or at least legislatively deal with human trafficking in Ontario—we met with a police officer. I won't name him because he did it as a friend and as a way of educating and informing us. I think it ended up being about a three-hour meeting and, wow—in some ways, way too enlightening. The things he had been dealing with as a police officer on the human trafficking file were incredible and deeply disturbing.

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One of the last things he suggested, if we wanted to do further research and find out about best practices in other jurisdictions, was that we pick up a book called *Somebody's Daughter* by Julian Sher. Julian Sher is a Canadian investigative reporter in Ontario. He actually ended up doing a lot of his research in—and the book, in fact, is primarily based on—American jurisdictions. But wow, what an eye-opener. I read it over the course of a day and a half. You didn't want to let your kids out after that. You were never going to send them to school; you were never going to let them talk to another person on the Internet. It was incredibly disturbing how these predators—and there is no other word for it—lure in their victims of human trafficking.

Ways in which girls are recruited includes posing as a boyfriend to the point where they would have the audacity to come and visit, have Thanksgiving dinner with the mom and dad; peers; or, in other cases, due to a lack of social assistance which forces individuals to seek other means of support. Typically, traffickers prey on a person's vulnerability. That is the recruitment process.

When I talk to police officers who deal with human trafficking, they tell me that to avoid being caught, these human traffickers swap girls and move them from one community to another before police are able to do the full

investigation and catch them. Because of how hard it is to track down human trafficking in our society with the current system in place, we need further measures to tackle and prevent human trafficking.

A good start is what my colleague the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock was suggesting when she tabled a motion calling on the government to establish an anti-human trafficking task force in our province that would be similar to the province's guns and gangs task force. When we spoke to the police who are actively engaged and involved in this file, they suggested that there is a model in place in our justice and investigative system that you can use and transfer to the human trafficking side. The task force would comprise police officers, crown prosecutors and social workers who would work together to apprehend traffickers and help victims of trafficking. The member's motion received unanimous support, but we're still waiting for the implementation of the task force.

Sexual violence and harassment and human trafficking are connected, and it's important that when addressing one, we address them all. While I applaud the minister and the government for bringing forward Bill 132, I hope this is not the last piece of legislative change we see coming forward because, as has already been mentioned by multiple speakers, there's an awful lot to do. Not all of it, of course, is legislative, but on the things we can, I think we should be able to agree and move forward quickly.

Another area that was heard during the committee involves the workplace. As we all know, many of us spend most of our time during the day at work. As a result, sexual violence and harassment also occurs in our workforces. It's important that we make individuals aware of signs of workplace sexual violence and harassment and that we report them immediately. Unfortunately, many victims of workplace sexual violence and harassment stay in the dark and stay quiet instead of speaking up. As a result, in some cases it takes a victim to reach their breaking point, literally, before speaking up. It should never have to take a person to start suffering from PTSD, to reach an extreme level, before speaking up. As I said before, we must cultivate an environment that will allow victims to want to speak up about their experiences instead of keeping them quiet. Without this, we will never be able to solve the systemic problem.

I want to take a moment to talk about the issues of sexual abuse among children and youth that we heard about during the committee. We need to prevent our province's most vulnerable from being susceptible to sexual abuse. Sexual abuse among children goes beyond simple bullying but involves traumatic acts, whether it is being forced to watch illicit acts or being forced to be touched or exposed. Child sexual abuse doesn't just have to be between an adult and a child, but can also be peer-to-peer, as we learned from the committee. Additionally, child sexual abuse can take place in, of course, a multitude of environments: schools, playgrounds, homes. It can involve anyone, anywhere, anytime.

The worst part of sexual abuse of children is its long-term negative effects. As we all know, during this time in an individual's life, they are still developing and maturing, and the results of experiencing such traumatic incidents can lead to an altering in a child's development. We have heard in the past and continue to hear about the negative short-term and long-term effects of children being bullied. The same problems exist for a child who has been sexually abused—and magnified. As a result, we cannot just address one issue and not the other. Both have impacts that are long-lasting, which is why we must do everything to prevent these incidents from occurring in the first place.

During the committee, we heard that post-secondary students also experience a disproportionate number of sexual assaults in comparison to the general population. Unfortunately, a rape culture exists in our province's universities and colleges and seems to be ignored or even hidden away. We also heard at the committee that these incidents occur in the first initial weeks of school and typically, the perpetrator is someone the victim knows. I believe the stat is that 75% know their abuser.

Speaker, going to university or college is a life-changing experience, and it should be a positive one, not a negative—but that's what is happening when our post-secondary institutions are not dealing with this issue straight-on. I must say that we did start to hear about some best practices, proactive approaches that some of the post-secondary institutions are doing. I applaud them for that. I think we need to raise the bar across the entire spectrum so that all colleges and universities are doing that, and, of course, Bill 132 does touch on that.

Another very important issue we heard about at the committee was the reporting and disclosure of sexual violence and harassment. During committee, we heard that there are a multitude of reasons why certain individuals do not report, including not knowing that what they experienced is a form of sexual violence and harassment. There are also more complicated reasons for not reporting, such as an individual's feelings and the relationship they have or do not have with authorities. For example, if living in poverty, you are less likely to report; as well, many aboriginal individuals choose not to report.

The reaction a victim receives after reporting can be discouraging. That is why it's so important that we are sympathetic and compassionate when listening to these individual stories.

Another possible discouraging factor for why an individual chooses not to report is, of course, the low conviction rate for crimes of sexual violence. If a person feels that no proper action is taken or feels that justice will not be served, it limits their interest and ability to report.

I want to stress how important it is for us to establish a system to prevent sexual violence and harassment from occurring, as well as to improve our system for dealing with these incidents.

I think it's important to talk about what we heard throughout the committee when debating this piece of legislation.

Bill 132 is a step in the right direction, as it will remove the two-year limitation period for survivors of sexual and domestic violence to make compensation applications, which will allow survivors more time to submit claims when they feel safe, reassured and, quite frankly, have begun that process of healing.

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Bill 132 also sets out that post-secondary institutions will be required to establish a separate sexual violence policy and will be required to review their policy, at minimum, every three years. When developing their policy, universities and colleges will be required to consult with students. I think that's an important factor in this. Universities and colleges will be required to report their initiatives, as well as incidents that occur, to the minister—again, a good step. Bill 132 will also lay out a process for how the universities or colleges will respond and address incidents and complaints. I think that's an appropriate, transparent part of the full disclosure that needs to happen.

It's all a good start, but I again say that it's just the beginning. There are many elements that have been left out of Bill 132 that need to be addressed. As I said earlier, we would like to see an anti-human trafficking task force be established. We've debated it, we've passed it unanimously and now let's move forward. We would also like to see an amendment to reinforce probation and parole services in Ontario. Again, there was a discussion today during question period about the Partner Assault Response Program—that was raised by deputants who appeared before the select committee. It is an issue. We are hearing about the problems on the ground, and we need to resolve them. There were a few recommendations, of the many, that I hope we can see some action on quickly.

As I mentioned before, the final report of the select committee is actually coming out on December 10, so it's kind of awkward because, as members of the committee, we actually know what's in the report. We spent an awful lot of time debating, discussing, coming to a consensus on what those recommendations will be, and yet here we are, literally a week before, in a legislative process, and we can't talk about it because it hasn't been tabled. So it is a little frustrating. Again, I would encourage people to take a close, careful look at what the deputants referenced in the select committee's interim report and build on that.

There have been a lot of reports and a lot of discussion over the years on this issue. I think what our stakeholders, what our survivors, what our organizations—like Family Transition Place, operating in Dufferin-Caledon—are really looking for at this point is more action. They want to see that their legislators and their government is supporting the important work that they do and that they're going to assist them in that work.

I have to give a shout-out to FTP, or Family Transition Place as they're known. Many, many years ago they decided that, as important as it was to assist the women who were trying to extract themselves from domestic

violence, it was equally important to have an education component that talked about prevention and education at the high school and public school level.

To give you a little bit of a brief history of that, when Family Transition Place started those programs in the public schools, it wasn't all sunshine and roses. There were many school boards that said, "We don't need that. We're not interested in that. We're good." There were schools and school communities that said, "That subject matter is too disturbing and we don't want to expose our students to it." And there has been a complete shift, where they have more schools, more principals interested in having this eight-week short program that essentially educates and allows students to understand what it means when you say "sexual assault," "workplace violence" and "intimate partner violence."

There's still a blame mentality that says, "I was foolish to put myself in that situation," and "I never should have gone on that date," or "I never should have gotten in that car." We have to get past that self-blame and that self-loathing because I truly believe it's one of the reasons why women choose not to come forward. They put it upon themselves that they did something wrong.

One of the things that this Family Transition Place program that operates in schools does is talk about how it's not your fault; you did nothing wrong. Once you say no, no means no. Going through various scenarios with the students has been incredibly eye-opening, to the point where there have been young people who have stayed behind, talked to the counsellors and said, "This is what happened to me. Where do I go from here?"

As much as we absolutely need to help and offer assistance and get the survivors into a better place, I believe we will be doing our job as legislators if we can also shift society to a point where we're concentrating more on prevention and build a focus that says, "We can do better. You can be empowered to make these choices and decisions."

I understand I'm not to mention people's absences. I do want to give credit where credit is due. The minister responsible has been in the chamber and listening to all of the debate, which I very much appreciate and respect her for doing. I think it shows an understanding and appreciation that there are ideas that can come from all sides and there are suggestions that don't have to be looked at in a negative way just because they happen to come from the third party or the official opposition.

I hope that we will take Bill 132 as a positive start. I hope it is not the end, and that once the select committee report is tabled on December 10, we will loop back and say, "What other pieces of legislation? What other policies? What other amendments to other statutes"—because, as you can imagine, this covers many, many ministries and legislative statutes already in existence—that we don't stop at Bill 132. I think we will have been doing a terrible disservice to the people who, once again, made the effort and were willing to appear before a legislative committee to say, "Here's what needs to be done."

As I mentioned before, there are many reports and many resources that we can tap into that previous legislators have done and other jurisdictions have done. We should be pulling out those best practices and figuring out how we can adopt them within the province of Ontario.

I will wrap up by saying thank you for Bill 132. Please tell me it's not the end; it's only the beginning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm pleased to rise to add my voice to this bill. I think it's very much needed. It seems to be a bill that has the support of all parties, and there seems to be tremendous work that has been done by members of all parties, and I want to commend and acknowledge all their work.

If we talk about sexual violence and gender-based violence in our society, we have to talk about the power imbalance that exists in our society and the way that power imbalances and societal inequities all inform and create and have an impact on this reality. One of the root causes—and many experts know far more than I do. In terms of how to address this violence and how to address discrimination of this nature, we need to get at the root causes, which is getting at some of the power imbalances that exist in society, looking at pay inequity, and looking at some of the other structures that create these barriers and create some of the circumstances that allow for this violence.

In addition, there's certainly a culture of violence and a culture of misogyny that need to have some serious action to deal with them. I am completely appalled at the existence of violence against women and I'm appalled by misogyny, but the reality is that they both exist, and we need to be committed to ending them. There's a cultural shift that needs to occur. There is a culture of violence that exists, and we can do a lot to shift that culture.

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I think there is tremendous work that is beginning to happen here in this Parliament. I'm encouraged by it, but I want to ensure that we all are committed to our resolve to ensure that this type of violence ends, that women do not have to live under the fear of violence, and that this type of inequity and unfair treatment ends once and for all.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa—Orléans.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It actually gives me great pleasure to stand in the House, and I'm pleased to support legislation that I believe, in Bill 132, will really help us continue the great work that our government has done in terms of stopping sexual violence and harassment.

I want to say thank you to the members for Dufferin—Caledon and Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock for their insights and recommendations on Bill 132.

I think there were several references made during this wonderful discussion. Certainly I was one of the members sitting on the select committee with those two

members, along with six other members in the House. It was nice, the non-partisanship that took place, because when you look at sexual violence and harassment, this is an area where I think we can all agree it cannot happen.

I just want to point out that I was a former social worker. There's an area where I think this bill is quite significant. I was working in the emergency room at times, and unfortunately, I had the sad experience to have women coming who had lived through violence in their lives. The fact that we are making what we call home—it's a little easier for those to get out of their lease arrangements. I think it's going to make a huge difference in the lives of several women who are unfortunately going through this sad experience.

I also want to share and appreciate the comments that my colleagues from across made regarding the testimony that we heard throughout the province as we were travelling this bill.

It gives me great support to bring my voice to Bill 132.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm happy to rise again to provide some comments. I know that on our side, we had our members from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, Dufferin-Caledon and Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock on the committee. I was able to join the Kingston session and was taken aback by some of the testimony. It highlighted the need for this bill.

Now, I had hoped that we would have some other amendments to this bill. We talked about the anti-human trafficking task force; we have the reinforcing of probation and parole services in Ontario; and restoring the Partner Assault Response Program to a 16-week model. It's sad when you have to—a way of getting rid of the wait-lists is to actually cut the time. On important issues like this, I think that funding—we see so much money being wasted. This would have been one place where you could have put some extra money to get rid of that wait-list.

Notifying crown attorneys when offenders refuse to sign orders—that just makes sense; implementing the government's Domestic Violence Death Review Committee; a risk assessment tool to flag high-risk repeat offenders—again, something that just makes sense; and the passing of Bill 130, introduced by the MPP from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

If we're going to get serious, we have to look at—this is not a partisan bill. The committee was long sought after by the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. It was talked about but never implemented until we saw more and more of these serious cases come up, like the one in Renfrew just a short time ago.

Some of these steps are easy, but they have to be taken. It takes legislation and it takes an effort to put these things through.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm proud to stand on Bill 132, Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015.

I'd like to talk to my colleagues as a husband; with my wife, Rita, I'm a father with three daughters, Tara, Chantel and Jacqueline. I also have four granddaughters. My oldest two daughters are educators. This is an important issue for me and my family, and I want to be clear. Let's be clear: As the video says, it's never okay.

I support the bill, but I also believe it could be improved. I think you should amend the health and safety act. We need strong language to protect a person or persons who are being violated so that they will come forward.

In my last little while, I'd like to talk about my one daughter, because there's an important part in this bill, because it is about education, not just for our daughters but our sons. She's a first-year student at Brock—very proud of that—taking health sciences. The act says—and it's very clear on this; there are no weasel words here—that every college and university shall have a sexual violence policy, a process in writing on how to respond. This is equally as important, maybe one of the important things here: including student involvement in the process and to help develop the policy for the university.

I want to close, Mr. Speaker—and I hope you listen to this and I hope my colleagues and the men in this room are listening. I firmly believe, and I've said it a number of times, that men can stop this sexual violence, sexual harassment and domestic violence. My colleagues: Just don't do it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock can reply.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's a very great privilege to speak today on this very sensitive issue and to thank the member from Niagara Falls who basically—I'll summarize—said, “Man up. Don't do it anymore.” I want to thank him for that. There's a good program out there that's called ManUp!, too.

I thank the minister responsible for women's issues for introducing the bill. I know that the parliamentary assistant, the member from Brampton-Springdale, also helped with the leadoff—and my colleagues on the select committee who spoke today. There's just so much to say in such a short time.

But we appreciate the fact that the bill was brought forward. I have mentioned recommendations. I was a little messed up on the time that was allotted, but the last one that I left off on was my colleague from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke's Bill 130 that he brought in, which will provide that an inmate who is granted parole, if he doesn't sign a certificate of parole, is not released. The bill also says that if an inmate who has committed sexual or domestic violence is released on parole, their location would be electronically monitored unless they do not pose a safety threat. So we bring that up.

I thank my colleague from Dufferin-Caledon for sitting on the select committee with me. The member from the Lanark, or Lennox—the Lanark county area; I couldn't get it out, Randy—sat on the select committee with us. I thank my colleague from Dufferin-Caledon for bringing up my human trafficking bill, which we'd like

to see implemented in the Legislature. I keep bringing up examples—the latest example was a 13-year-old girl who was human-trafficked—and the need to do more for sexual violence, the sex trade and the coercion that goes along with human trafficking.

There's much more to be discussed. I'll be able to do some more hits at later time, I hope, Mr. Speaker, and make more comments, but I hope this Legislature moves forward on this legislation, certainly with the input from the select committee again.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am very pleased to rise today as NDP critic for women's issues to lead off the debate on Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. I want to begin by thanking the Legislative Assembly for having the foresight to create the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. It was an incredible privilege for me to sit as a member of that committee and hear first-hand from survivors and front-line agencies about the devastating impact of sexual violence and harassment, and about the changes needed to prevent sexual violence and harassment and improve supports for survivors. Much of my speech today draws upon the input that was provided to the select committee through in-person deputations and written submissions.

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Unlike most of the legislation that is debated in this House, which must pass second reading before it is referred to committee for public comment, in many respects, Bill 132 has already been through an extensive public review process. All of the legislative amendments included in the bill were announced in March 2015 as part of the government's It's Never Okay action plan. This allowed people who appeared before the select committee to provide feedback on the proposed amendments, to offer their perspectives on those specific legislative actions outlined in the plan, and to highlight other system failures and gaps that require additional legislative response.

Speaker, I want to express my profound and deep appreciation to all those who stepped forward to appear before the committee, with particular thanks to the incredibly brave survivors who shared stories of gut-wrenching pain, but also hope—hope that sharing their own suffering would lead to changes and prevent others from having to go through the trauma they experienced.

I'm now going to say something that New Democrats rarely have the occasion to say in this place: This is a good bill. It deserves to be supported. On behalf of the NDP caucus, I offer my congratulations to the government for bringing this legislation forward.

Before I turn to the specifics of the legislation, it is important to acknowledge the context in which the action plan was developed and this legislation took shape. Certainly, sexual violence and sexual harassment are not new issues. However, over the past few years, these issues have taken on a new urgency. A cascading string of events and viral social media campaigns have high-

lighted just how prevalent and just how deeply rooted sexual violence is in our society.

We were all shocked when the allegations broke against Jian Ghomeshi, then stunned when we saw the allegations against Bill Cosby.

We watched in disbelief as Citytv reporter Shauna Hunt was harassed on live television by men who grabbed her microphone and targeted her with offensive and vulgar remarks.

We shook our heads as we listened to former Chief of the Defence Staff, General Tom Lawson, declare that men are "biologically wired" for sexual misconduct, as an explanation for the culture of sexism and misogyny at Royal Military College.

Just last month, we were disgusted by the comments of Alberta Justice Robin Camp, who said during a sexual assault trial that because the complainant had been drinking, there was an onus on her to be more careful, then asked why she couldn't just keep her knees together if she didn't want to be penetrated.

The explosion of Twitter hashtags under #YesAllWomen and #BeenRapedNeverReported serves as a powerful reminder of how depressingly common are women's experiences of misogyny, harassment and sexual assault.

The normalization of sexual violence that excuses perpetrators and blames survivors is known as rape culture and is reinforced constantly through social practices and in social media. Ontario's action plan and the public education measures it includes will play a significant role in identifying and combating rape culture, as well as the underlying misogyny that supports it, to reduce sexual violence and empower survivors.

Bill 132 implements most, if not all, of the legislative commitments that were outlined in the action plan to strengthen provisions related to sexual violence and harassment in the workplace, on campuses, in rental housing and through the civil claims process. It is an omnibus bill that includes six schedules, and the amendments it proposes reinforce much of what members of the select committee heard over 17 days of public hearings and in more than 150 oral and written deputations.

I'm going to begin with a brief overview of Bill 132 and will then provide more detail on each of the proposed amendments and potential areas for further legislative action.

Schedule 1 amends the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act to remove the current two-year limitation period for applications to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board for crimes of sexual violence and domestic violence.

Schedule 2 amends the Limitations Act to remove the limitation period for all sexual assault proceedings, as well as certain proceedings based on assault or other misconduct of a sexual nature.

Schedules 3 and 5 amend the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005, to require all colleges, universities and private career colleges to have stand-alone sexual

violence policies. The policies must be developed with student input and reviewed at least once every three years. Institutions are also required to collect data for submission to the minister, or the superintendent for private career colleges, on student use of sexual violence supports and services, reported incidents and complaints of sexual violence, efforts to raise student awareness of supports and services, and implementation and effectiveness of sexual violence policies.

Regulations will be developed to address the nature of student involvement in policy development and review; elements of sexual violence policies; faculty, staff and student training; and efforts to promote and raise awareness of sexual violence policies.

Schedule 4 amends the Occupational Health and Safety Act to specify that workplace harassment includes workplace sexual harassment, and also adds a new definition of workplace sexual harassment to the act. Under the amendments, workplace harassment policies will be required to include procedures for workers to report incidents of workplace sexual harassment to a person other than the employer or supervisor, if the employer or supervisor is the alleged harasser. This certainly addresses a concern that was raised with us in the select committee.

The policy must also include information on how personally identifying details about an incident or a complaint of workplace harassment will be protected unless disclosing this information is necessary for the purposes of investigation or taking corrective action, or is otherwise required by law.

And, finally, the policies must include how the worker and the alleged harasser will be informed of the results of the investigation, and of any corrective action taken.

Schedule 4 also imposes new duties on employers to protect workers from sexual harassment by taking three specific actions, and focuses new attention on investigations of workplace sexual harassment. Employers are obligated to investigate and address sexual harassment incidents and complaints; they must inform the parties in writing of the results of the investigation and corrective actions; and they must review the workplace harassment programs annually. Importantly, schedule 4 also empowers occupational health and safety inspectors to order an employer to retain an impartial third party at the employer's expense to conduct an investigation into an alleged incident of workplace harassment.

Finally, schedule 6 amends the Residential Tenancies Act to allow leases to be terminated with 28 days' notice instead of the standard 60 days where a tenant or a dependent child has been deemed to have experienced domestic violence or sexual violence.

The first schedule, which amends the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act, will allow survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence to apply for compensation to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board at any time. Currently, the Compensation for Victims of Crime Act requires that applications for compensation from the CICB be submitted within two years of the crime taking

place, unless the CICB determines that there is good reason to grant an extension.

While this has allowed some adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse to make a claim, it is up to the discretion of the board to determine what constitutes a good reason. Many survivors of sexual assault may not be emotionally or psychologically able to disclose their abuse and begin the process of seeking redress for many years after the violence takes place. This change will let them pursue compensation at a time when they feel ready without having to worry about justifying why they did not come forward sooner.

Victims of violent crime often desire a formal acknowledgment that what has happened to them was wrong. In contrast to the criminal trial process, which focuses on determining whether an accused person is guilty or not, the purpose of a CICB application is to provide victims with societal acknowledgment of their victimization. When the CICB grants an application, the written decision that is sent to the victim specifically states that the applicant was a victim of crime, and acknowledges the injustice that the individual suffered. For many victims, the CICB decision is the first official acknowledgement of their victimization, and also their first opportunity to share what happened to them with an official decision-maker. For many victims this is both meaningful and therapeutic.

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A study by legal scholars at the University of Ottawa called *Holding Society Accountable: The Therapeutic Consequences of Civil Actions for Damages and Compensation Claims by Victims of Sexual Abuse* found that "compensation claims for losses arising from sexual abuse are different from many other legal processes in one important aspect. Therapeutic effects are neither incidental nor unexpected. Rather, claimants enter the processes with explicit therapeutic expectations. They see the claiming process as having a role, often a critical role, in their recoveries or well-being."

This research demonstrates that expanding access to the civil claims process is especially valuable for victims of sexual assault.

At the same time, while the primary motivation of victims going through the claims process may be to be heard, monetary compensation is also important. Given the severity of the harm caused by sexual assault for many survivors, the maximum \$25,000 lump sum payment available from the CICB will not begin to cover the years of psychological counselling necessary to deal with the guilt, self-blame and shame that they experience; nor can it ensure access to services where the services do not exist or where costs to access services are prohibitive.

This is an issue we heard about in the North, particularly among First Nations people. First Nations people with status may be eligible for services but are capped at a lifetime number of hours. For residential school survivors, for male survivors of childhood sexual abuse, there is nowhere to turn once those hours are used up. First Nations persons without status, like many non-First Nations people, do not have access to any coverage.

As we heard repeatedly during the select committee, the intensive and specialized psychological counselling required to help survivors of sexual assault and childhood sexual abuse in particular are not covered by OHIP. These survivors often require psychological or psychiatric support from professionals who understand post-traumatic stress disorder and are experienced in trauma-informed care, in addition to the counselling that is offered at the community level by sexual assault centres and other agencies. This kind of care is expensive, and it is not funded, for the most part, by our public health system.

Further, the CICB does not compensate for damages related to the mental distress of having to testify in criminal court. Given what we know about the revictimization and the retraumatization that are often associated with the criminal court process for survivors of sexual violence, this is a significant exclusion.

CICB awards are protected, which means they cannot be seized or garnished by creditors or transferred to others. However, certain payments from CICB compensation awards are considered in the calculation of assets or income for the determination of benefits from Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program. This means that survivors of sexual abuse who are in receipt of Ontario Works or ODSP and receive compensation from the CICB or from civil courts may see their benefits reduced or their eligibility for continued benefits compromised. This could force survivors with disabilities to choose between pursuing their perpetrator through the civil claims process or jeopardizing their access to benefits.

A similar issue concerns rent-geared-to-income housing under the Housing Services Act, since CICB compensation awards are not exempted from household assets used to determine eligibility for rent-geared-to-income housing.

Two lawyers appearing before the select committee, Elizabeth Grace and Susan Vella, wrote in their brief, "The restrictions on what victims of sexual abuse receiving ODSP and OW benefits can retain from their compensation awards raises an access-to-justice issue. These victims have to consider whether pursuing what will amount to discounted compensation from the courts and from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board is really worth the enormous stress and anxiety associated with entering an adversarial and personally highly invasive legal process."

Speaker, there are already exceptions under both the OW and the ODSP Acts for compensation that involve the government as a party; for example, the Ontario Hepatitis C Assistance Plan, the Walkerton compensation plan, and local payments made under the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program. We urge that all payments made to victims of sexual crimes by the CICB be similarly exempted.

Speaker, the need for such an exemption is clear when you consider the research about the increased risk of sexual violence among women from marginalized

groups, including racialized women, sexual minority women and women living in poverty. Further, 83% of women with disabilities will be sexually assaulted during their lifetime, making it even more likely that women on ODSP will be victimized.

Another point that was raised during the select committee concerns the rules at the CICB that create barriers for indigenous victims, who face significantly higher rates of sexual violence than non-aboriginal Ontarians. Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto told us that the CICB is permitted to consider a claimant's criminal record in the determination of an award. She pointed out that, from an aboriginal perspective, failure to take into account the over-policing and over-charging of aboriginal peoples, as is called for by Gladue principles, can result in aboriginal people getting lower compensation awards compared to non-aboriginal people or not getting any compensation at all.

Here I want to reinforce once again the urgent need to move forward on a national inquiry for missing and murdered indigenous women, another issue we heard raised repeatedly during the select committee. We have to understand the systemic structures that have allowed 1,200 indigenous women and girls in Canada to be murdered or to go missing since 1980, and why governments have resisted taking action.

Indigenous women are three times more likely than non-indigenous women to report being a victim of a sexual crime and four times more likely to be murdered. Their families have been failed by our collective refusal over far too many years to acknowledge the reality of what is happening to indigenous women and girls, by our complicity and blaming individual victims or their communities, and by our unwillingness to hold governments to account. They deserve the closure and the healing that a national inquiry can bring, and their communities deserve a pan-Canadian coordinated effort to end the violence and prevent the harm. Speaker, I want to assure the government that the NDP caucus stands fully behind the Ontario government's participation in that federal inquiry.

Schedule 2 of Bill 132 proposes substantial amendments to the Limitations Act by establishing a no-limitation period for all cases of sexual assault and certain cases of assault or other misconduct of a sexual nature. Specifically, it removes all limits on any proceedings that are based on a sexual assault, other misconduct of a sexual nature involving minors or where there is a power imbalance; for example, where the person who committed the assault was in a position of trust or authority, or where the victim was financially, emotionally, physically or otherwise dependent on the other person. The third category is an assault involving minors or in an intimate relationship or where the person making the claim was financially, emotionally, physically or otherwise dependent on the other person.

Removing limitation periods for sexual assault is a trend that is taking hold across the country. Ontario is, in fact, rather late in catching up to other provinces. British

Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nova Scotia have all already made exceptions for sexual assault in personal injury lawsuits. Certainly, however, the amendments proposed in the bill will eliminate what has been a significant legal hurdle for sexual abuse survivors seeking redress through the civil courts.

Currently, the Limitations Act provides a basic two-year limitation period for civil lawsuits in Ontario and an ultimate 15-year limitation period. But it also creates what is effectively a hierarchy of sexual abuse by distinguishing between sexual assault that occurs within a relationship of power or dependency and sexual assault that occurs outside a power-dependency relationship.

The first category involves cases where the person who committed the assault had charge of the other person, was in a position of trust or authority or was someone on whom the other person was financially or otherwise dependent. This category of sexual assault is currently exempt from any limitation period and it includes assault within parent-child, clergy-parishioner, health care professional-patient, teacher-student and similar power-dependency relationships.

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The second category includes sexual assault that occurs within relationships that do not exhibit a power dependency, such as assaults committed by strangers, by co-workers or, in the case of students, by fellow students. For this category of sexual assault, the current limitation period depends on the victim's capacity to start the proceeding. There is no limitation period during any time when the victim is incapable of suing because of his or her mental, physical or psychological condition. However, once it is determined that the victim has the capacity to commence the proceeding, the limitation period begins.

Because of the nature of the harm done by sexual assault, this creates legal challenges. As one of the presenters to the committee explained, "Sometimes victims come forward and they're ready to start saying something but then they change their minds because they get too scared and they back away. Then, maybe a little while later, they come forward again; they've had a little bit more support. So then the insurance company or the defendant is in the position of arguing, 'Well, they were ready back then, so their limitation period has run out.'"

Another problem with the current Limitations Act is that it defines assault as including a battery, but does not provide a definition for sexual assault. What this means is that sexual assault encompasses only the apprehension of an unwanted and imminent touching of a sexual nature, which is the common-law definition of assault, and an actual such touching, which is the common-law definition of battery. This overlooks a broad range of sexual misconduct that may not include actual or threatened sexual touching, such as the luring of children for the purposes of sexual exploitation or to create Internet pornography.

We all know the devastating and tragic story of Amanda Todd, who became the victim of relentless

cyberbullying after being manipulated to expose her breasts via webcam, and who eventually took her own life. The emergence of sexting and the spread of online predators make it critical that these forms of sexual misconduct be addressed in civil proceedings.

I want to raise the same concern I mentioned earlier in connection with schedule 1 about compensation awards for survivors on ODSP and OW. If abuse victims who are in receipt of ODSP or OW pursue compensation through civil lawsuits, they are required to sign agreements that they will reimburse the government for the amount of benefits that they have received and will receive as condition for their ongoing eligibility for assistance. This means that, similar to CICB awards, any compensation they receive as a result of the lawsuit, whether through settlement or court award, can potentially make them ineligible to continue receiving benefits.

The lawyers who appeared before the select committee noted that "since 1990, society and our courts have gained a deeper appreciation of the profound harms caused by sexual abuse, which in turn has resulted in steadily higher non-pecuniary (pain and suffering) damages awards." For that reason, they urged a rethink of the fixed income and asset exemption amounts under the ODSP act and the Ontario Works Act. The \$25,000 OW exemption amount for compensation awards has not been increased in 25 years. The \$100,000 ODSP exemption amount for compensation awards has not been increased in 18 years. Inflation alone, even without factoring in the general shift to higher settlements, would justify raising these exemptions.

Altogether these changes in schedules 1 and 2 are welcome changes for survivors who need to focus on their own recovery before they are ready to move forward with a civil claim. The proposed amendments will eliminate the prospect of legal wrangling over whether the Limitations Act applies. It will result in less costly litigation, less risky litigation and improved access to justice for victims.

While both schedules are important to create a more responsive justice system and stronger survivor supports, it must be remembered that the number of survivors who will actually benefit remains very, very small. Quite simply, women do not report. They do not report to the police and, too frequently, they do not disclose their experience of sexual assault to anyone.

In 2012, University of Ottawa researcher Holly Johnson estimated that out of every 1,000 sexual assaults each year in Canada, only 33 are reported to the police. Of these, 29 are recorded as a crime. Of these, 12 have charges laid. Of these, six are prosecuted. Finally, of those six that are prosecuted, only three result in conviction.

Her report concludes:

"The true incidence of sexual violence in women's lives will likely never be known. The stigma, shame and blame associated with sexual violence have cast a shroud of silence over women's experiences and affect their willingness to report to police or to disclose to other public agencies...."

"Defining and talking about experiences of sexual violence is a difficult process for women and is undertaken with considerable risk. When women disclose to others that they have been sexually assaulted, they are often confronted with skepticism, doubt and outright blame for provoking or at least not resisting the attack strenuously enough."

The removal of limitations will not do anything to address these issues. Survivors who file civil suits will still be subject to invasive cross-examinations, victim-blaming and a drawn-out court process, making it unlikely that women will be lining up to file these kinds of proceedings.

Schedules 3 and 5 of the bill deal with the obligations of Ontario colleges, universities and career colleges to protect students from sexual violence. While we have known about sexual violence in university and college campuses for many years, recent high-profile cases in Ontario and across the country have focused greater attention on this issue. We all recall the Dalhousie dentistry male Facebook group, the rape chants at UBC and Saint Mary's University, and sexual assault allegations against the University of Ottawa's men's hockey team.

There appears to be no shortage of stories. In fact, just last month, we heard about sexual violence at the University of British Columbia, where six women complained to administration of sexual harassment by a graduate student, and then waited more than a year and a half before action was taken. This has resulted in one of the young women filing a complaint with the BC Human Rights Tribunal against the university for its handling of the issue.

But the real catalyst for the changes proposed in Bill 132 was the investigative reporting by the Toronto Star last fall, which found that only nine institutions out of more than a hundred that were contacted across Canada had a dedicated sexual assault policy in place. Many of the female students who were interviewed by the Star about their experiences with campus sexual assault believed that the university had failed to properly support them.

This was echoed in presentations made to the select committee by student organizations. The Canadian Federation of Students described sexual violence as "ubiquitous" at every university, so much so that it has become the norm for Ontario campuses.

This is not alarmist. This is borne out in the statistics. Since most post-secondary students are women in their early twenties, and young women under 25 show the highest rates of sexual assault and criminal harassment, the incidence of sexual violence on campuses is intensified. Four out of five female undergraduate students surveyed at Canadian universities report experiencing dating violence—that is, physical, sexual or psychological assault by a dating partner. Research suggests that as many as 25% of post-secondary-aged women will experience sexual assault at some point in their academic career.

I think of my own daughter, who is in second year at McMaster University and lives in a house with five other young women. I realize there is a very good possibility that at least one of those young women living in that house will be sexually assaulted before she completes her degree.

Many MPPs recall the CBC story from earlier this year—I think it was in February—about the incidence of sexual assault on post-secondary campuses. What that story revealed was a surprisingly low number of assaults, but it also showed huge variation in the data captured by institutions, with little consistency in how post-secondary institutions collect and report sexual assault data, as well as a lack of comparable information across institutions.

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To begin to address this gap, schedule 3 of Bill 132 proposes a definition of sexual violence as follows: "any sexual act or act targeting a person's sexuality, whether the act is physical or psychological in nature, that is committed, threatened or attempted against a person without the person's consent, and includes sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, indecent exposure, voyeurism and sexual exploitation."

Speaker, the proposed amendments to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and the Private Career Colleges Act will require all Ontario post-secondary institutions to have stand-alone sexual violence policies. The policy must outline the process for how the college or university will respond to and address incidents and complaints of sexual violence involving students enrolled at the college or the university. Colleges, universities and private career colleges are further expected to consider student input in preparing their policy and to review the policy every three years.

These institutions would also be required to collect and provide to the government, or in the case of private career colleges, the superintendent appointed by the government, information and data that includes:

- information about the availability of supports, services and accommodation relating to sexual violence and the number of times these are requested and obtained by students;

- any initiatives and programs established by the institution to promote awareness of these supports and services;

- the number of incidents and complaints of sexual violence reported by students, and information about such incidents and complaints; and, finally

- the implementation and effectiveness of the policy.

The specifics of what must be reported, including what constitutes an incident or complaint of sexual violence, will be provided through regulation. As I mentioned earlier, the CBC news story in February, which collected data across the country from institutions, showed that there was no standard definition of what constitutes a complaint, what constitutes an incident or what constitutes a sexual assault. So the regulations that spell out the framework for the categories of data that is going to be reported are going to be critical in ensuring comparability across institutions.

I also noted that the language in schedules 3 and 5 about providing the data that is collected to the minister or superintendent upon request differs from the commitment that was made in *It's Never Okay* to publicly report the data. I listened carefully to the minister's comments when she spoke to the legislation and I am reassured by her announcement that the data will be made public in the spring of 2017, I believe. I will be giving lots of advance notice that this is something I'm very interested in and something that New Democrats will be monitoring very, very closely.

It's also noteworthy that *It's Never Okay* referred to significant student input, while Bill 132 merely says that student input is to be considered in the development, review and amendment of the policy. Again, Speaker, it is going to be left to regulation to spell out exactly how student input shall be provided and considered. This is another issue that New Democrats will be monitoring carefully, since it will be critical to ensure that consultation with students that is conducted in the development of the policy is meaningful consultation; that there be substantial student representation from across the campus, including, of course, elected student leaders, in particular; and that the consultation be broad-based to ensure that a diversity of views and perspectives is captured.

While many academic institutions currently make reference to sexual harassment and/or sexual assault in their existing policies—often in the student code of conduct—the proposed amendments require that a separate sexual violence policy be prepared. Shortly before the announcement of the action plan, Ontario's 24 publicly funded colleges came together to prepare a sexual assault and sexual violence policy and protocol template that outlines a variety of steps, both proactive and reactive, to address sexual violence. I understand that this template has been shared with Ontario colleges and career colleges in the province, and there are also excellent resources prepared by the Ontario Women's Directorate and METRAC that will assist institutions in developing their policies.

Again, this is another area that the legislation leaves to regulation in terms of the content of the policies that are developed. If we learned anything from the experience with Bill 168—the previous amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act—it's that merely having a policy does nothing to ensure that issues of violence and harassment will be addressed. The content of the policy is much more important than having a policy, and resources and support for implementation of the policy are the other critical aspects.

Schedules 3 and 5 place an onus on institutions to ensure that their employees and their students are made aware of the new policies through effective communication and training. A broader understanding of sexual violence as distinct from sexual assault will need to be understood at all levels of the institutions. In many cases, this will represent a profound culture shift that will not be

able to be accomplished without a specific but very wide-ranging plan.

In addition, a specific requirement of the amendments in schedules 3 and 5 is that there be a process to address incidents and complaints of sexual violence. Typically, such processes include supporting the individuals involved, providing them with options, conducting thorough investigations and following through with outcomes once the investigations are complete.

Given the serious nature of allegations of sexual violence, a fair and thorough investigation would be expected. Consistency would be ensured through a clearly articulated investigation process and effective training for investigators on both process and subject matter relating to the policy.

Finally, given the requirement to report to the minister, colleges and universities must ensure that they build into their policy and related programs the ability to gather information and to measure the effectiveness of their efforts. This should include the ability to capture both qualitative and quantitative information from students.

I discussed this legislation with the Canadian Federation of Students, and one of the recommendations they made, which I think would be valuable information for the government in the data collection, is to conduct a climate survey of students at individual post-secondary institutions, to establish a baseline so that there is a context for the incidence data that is collected. The climate survey would reveal feelings or perceptions across the entire student body of safety on campus, while the incidence data would show how reporting is being carried out.

Speaker, before I move on, I did want to address something that I see as a significant missed opportunity for this government. Last year, we all received a report on the implementation of the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee recommendations that had been made between 2007 and 2011. One of the recommendations that was made by the coroner in 2010 called on the Ontario Association of College and University Security Administrators to “develop a consistent and comprehensive plan, in collaboration with health and counselling services available on campus, to educate students on the nature and risks of violence in dating relationships through public education campaigns and outreach programs to students dealing with intimate violence.”

This is one of the issues that has been raised today during the debate by my colleagues in the PC caucus as something that we heard often in the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment; that is, the linkages between domestic violence and sexual violence.

Here we have a recommendation from the Domestic Violence Death Review Committee that speaks directly to the college and university sector, and is directly focused on intimate partner violence and domestic violence. The policy that is described in the amendments that we have before us in Bill 132 is very specific and it

speaks only to sexual violence to the exclusion of domestic violence. This is a missed opportunity that I would encourage the government to think about as these policies are developed, because we know that students on campuses are involved in intimate partner relationships and therefore face the incidence of the intimate partner violence that we know occurs throughout our society.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1801.

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Thursday 3 December 2015

Jeudi 3 décembre 2015

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 3 December 2015

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 3 décembre 2015

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good morning. Please join me in prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SMART GROWTH FOR OUR COMMUNITIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR UNE CROISSANCE INTELLIGENTE DE NOS COLLECTIVITÉS

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 1, 2015, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act / Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you, Speaker, and good morning to you. Here we are on December 3—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Good morning, Percy.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Indeed. No matter the day, the week or the month, it's always an honour to stand here in Ontario's provincial Parliament on behalf of the good people in the riding of Windsor—Tecumseh.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: It's good to have you here.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thank you. Speaker, I have to tell you that as a relatively new member of this House, it was a real eye-opener for me to take part in committee hearings and a clause-by-clause review of Bill 73, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act. We heard from quite a few stakeholders, and they put forward some great ideas.

I just assumed that when we consult with the people whose lives and livelihoods will be affected by the legislation that we bring forth, we would take their points of view very seriously. Imagine my disappointment when it came time to go through the bill clause by clause.

Based on what we heard at committee, we in the NDP put forward dozens of amendments; however, very few were approved. It was the same thing for the amendments brought to the table by the Conservatives: the Liberal majority on the committee voted most of them down. It makes you wonder—at least it made me second-guess the entire process. We, the NDP and the Conservatives, fought to have the delegations given much more time for their presentations than the Liberals had originally said

they would have. I guess that in itself was a victory. I just assumed, since we would hear more from the delegations, that we would actually listen to what they had to say and, if it made sense, we would adopt it as an amendment to the bill. Well, live and learn, I guess.

For example, the mayor of Barrie came to the committee. Jeff Lehman is also the chair of the Large Urban Mayor's Caucus of Ontario, LUMCO; he represents the mayors of the 27 largest cities in our province. He told us about Barrie and their very unique issue. Council there has been working on a deal with developers that would see them—the developers—pay, on a voluntary basis, more than what is called for under the traditional formula for development fees. But the bill says you can't do that; you can't have voluntary fees paid over and above development fees. This agreement, which was negotiated in an open, transparent and collaborative manner, was put at risk by Bill 73.

You see, the developers want to open up a chunk of land in the south of Barrie, and the city wanted it to happen but didn't have enough money to pay for the roads, sewers, bridges and storm water retention ponds that would be required, if the development was to proceed in a timely and cost-efficient way. So, through negotiation, they worked out a voluntary agreement as part of the municipality's asset management plan. They spent a great deal of time analyzing the project and the cost of it, and apportioned who would pay for what and when the plan would proceed.

Yes, there would be tax increases to help pay for it, but in order to make sure it happened, the developers agreed to prepay development charges to front-end the cost, and an agreement was entered into that would see the city get more money on a per-unit basis that would not be refunded to the developers. But wording in the proposed bill is, like, "No, no; can't do that," even though the city's—the taxpayers'—interests were balanced with those of the developers.

Mayor Lehman told us flat out that this bill not only will cause great hardship to the city of Barrie but to the regional economy as well. Make no bones about it: The mayor said the city cannot handle the financial shortfall that this bill would impose on them. He wanted his area to be grandfathered, to be protected, because of the time the region had already invested in this plan and because of the financial arrangements that had been freely negotiated with the development community.

LUMCO, the large urban mayors' caucus, was in full support of Barrie's request, and that was testified to by the mayor of Oakville, Rob Burton, who also presented

to the committee. They both argued that growth should pay for growth, and—like the presentation from the president of AMO, the mayor of Tecumseh, my good friend Gary McNamara—they all feel, as did other presenters, that there should not be any services handcuffed by a 10% discount and that there should be an end to the ineligible services list.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me get back to the Barrie example by telling you about a similar case brought to the committee by the city of Pickering. The director of corporate services, who doubles as the city solicitor in Pickering, is Paul Bigioni. He told us what impact the proposed bill would have on his community. In Pickering, they have something on the planning table called the Seaton lands. This is a huge proposal. It's one of the largest greenfield developments in all of Canada at the moment. Within six years, Seaton is planned to have 13,000 new housing units occupied by 36,000 new residents.

0910

Picture this, Speaker: Currently, the population of Pickering is about 94,000; imagine adding 36,000 more folks there by 2021. On top of that, just picture this construction site: more than seven million square feet of retail, commercial, institutional and other non-residential development—seven million square feet. That's what Seaton is. You talk about places to grow—this is huge.

Think about it for a moment. Imagine the bulldozers and all that heavy equipment. Imagine the number of jobs that would be created for the construction trades needed for this development, a massive infrastructure project. Think about it: fire halls, recreational facilities, libraries, roads, storm sewers—you name it.

But here's the rub: Pickering, like Barrie, has negotiated a deal with the province, the private landowners where the Seaton development is planned—so that the cost of providing the needed infrastructure is shared among all the parties. But part of that deal, just like the one in Barrie, calls for voluntary fees over and above the regular development charges, and this bill will put an end to any and such agreements.

Again, Pickering asked to be exempted or grandfathered. Mr. Bigioni called this section of the bill dangerous because it could nullify all of the hard work that has gone into Pickering's proposal. He told us he doubted the original intent of the smart growth bill was to curtail growth; in other words, to complicate it, to kill it.

The massive scope of this proposal, a proposal, by the way, that is no ordinary traditional subdivision agreement—Mr. Bigioni called it a provincial plan, a provincial plan created by the province under the Ontario Planning and Development Act. It's part of the central Pickering development plan, and it's one of only a handful of such plans ever created by the province. It's good policy.

The rub, again: When I asked them whether that deal had been signed, sealed and delivered, he said no, adding that it had taken months to negotiate it, was agreed to in principle by all the parties, including—get this—the province. But maybe, maybe, it's a case of the right hand not

knowing what the left hand is up to. But the architects of this bill will nullify this huge agreement in principle.

During clause-by-clause, I reminded the government members that they held seats in Barrie, in Pickering and Oakville, where Mayor Burton was from. He testified, too, as being in total agreement with it. We suggested a recess in the hearing proceedings. The member from Oxford suggested we take a 20-minute time out to allow the government members to consult with their local members who would be affected by any political fallout from this bill if the bill scuttled these agreements in principle in Barrie and in Pickering.

Well, we were hoping they would contact them and get a handle on what would be the fallout if these projects weren't exempted or grandfathered. We took that 20-minute break. Now, guess what? I don't know if indeed the member from Barrie was consulted, or the member from Ajax-Pickering or the members from the Oakville area were consulted or not, but I do know that the government members, when they got back after a recess, would not support our amendments asking that those properties be exempted from this bill.

I'm no fortune teller, but I would guess there could well be political fallout if indeed those massive projects fail because this government didn't do what their municipal representative said was an absolute necessity.

Let's get back to the presentation from the president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario. The principle of development fees is that growth should pay for growth; at least that's the municipal principle. I drank the municipal Kool-Aid for seven years as a city councillor and a board member, not only with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities but also I served as vice-president and chair of the large urban caucus at AMO.

I believe that growth should pay for growth. I'm not alone in that, Speaker. I'm sure many members of this House feel the same way, especially those who had some municipal council experience. That's why I sat up and listened closely when the AMO president was speaking. He called for an end to the list of services that are currently exempt from development fees, and he called for an end to the list of services that get a 10% discount from development fees.

I was hoping that the government members would see this smart growth bill—because that's the title of it: the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act. But Mayor McNamara represents 444 communities in Ontario. He knows what it takes to pay for growth, and he knows what his communities need in order to grow. But for the most part his presentation fell on deaf ears because the government members don't drink the municipal Kool-Aid; they get their drinks from the development community, which doesn't like paying the fees they're charged now, let alone being told they have to pay a little bit more.

We also heard from the Municipal Finance Officers' Association of Ontario. Now, these are the good folks who put together preliminary budget proposals for the mayors and councillors. They pointed out that only 204 of the 444 municipalities in Ontario actually collect de-

velopment fees. Although this new act allows for greater recovery of transit costs, they also reminded us that of those 204 municipalities which collect development fees, only 37 of them—37 of the 204—actually have municipal transit systems. So the bottom line on that is, even though there are some improvements in the bill, it won't mean much to a whole bunch of other municipal governments in Ontario.

We heard from the regional chair from Waterloo, Ken Seiling. He's also the chair of MARCO, the group which represents the regional chairs and mayors of the larger single-tier municipalities in the province. Chair Seiling says that it has been very clear for a long time in Ontario that growth doesn't pay for growth. He is of the view that in the region of Waterloo, for example, development charges are expected to fund only 36% of the growth-related infrastructure over the next 10 years—36%. He also had a very bad experience with the Ontario Municipal Board, which basically tore up his community's official plan and he was abandoned—abandoned—by the province when it came time to repeal that OMB decision. That's despite the fact, Speaker, that his official plan was in complete compliance with Ontario growth plan statements and policies—complete compliance. This all led to a five-year delay in the region's growth plan.

Speaker, we in the NDP tried to get real changes to the OMB but were rebuffed by the government members, who stated that there will be another time, another place for those discussions. Similarly, we tried time and time again to engage the government members in a real dialogue on inclusionary zoning. Oh, how we tried. Again, all attempts were turned away with the promise that there will be another time and another place for that discussion. They say their Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy will be ready sometime in the new year. We've heard that all before. Our member for Parkdale–High Park has had numerous private members' bills adopted and sent to committee and never heard from again.

0920

Speaker, if inclusionary zoning had been adopted the first time Ms. DiNovo brought it to this House, we would have seen the creation of 12,000 new affordable housing units in Toronto alone—12,000 new affordable units that we missed out on because of the government delay in bringing in any kind of legislation to deal with inclusionary zoning in Ontario.

Several delegations came to us about inclusionary zoning; for example, ACORN, which represents low- to modest-income people on social justice issues. Alejandra Ruiz Vargas reminded us that we are in a crisis situation in Ontario when it comes to affordable housing. She didn't see inclusionary zoning as a magic bullet, but she knew it was one tool to help the situation. We all in this House should recognize that as well. What are we afraid of?

Toronto Councillor Mike Layton came to the committee and reminded us that he has unanimous consent from his council colleagues for a made-in-Toronto form of inclusionary zoning that he was asking for. He wants the

City of Toronto Act to be amended to make that a possibility.

The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Mr. Milczyn, has a private member's bill calling for inclusionary zoning. He's a former city councillor in Toronto. He knows it's just one tool that municipal planners could choose to use if it would make sense for their community. So let's get on with it. We in the NDP caucus will be supporting his bill or any bill that the government brings forth on inclusionary zoning.

This bill is flawed when it comes to smart growth, meaning we could have accomplished so much more with some well-thought-out amendments. But having said that, the bill does merit support, as flawed as it is, and that's because it's a small step in the right direction.

We could have done more for smaller, rural municipalities. They need flexibility in their planning. If a developer shows up at the town hall or at the township office and makes a proposal, they want to jump on it. They don't have time to jump through the hoops that this bill puts in front of them. We can't have one cookie-cutter approach that's designed by someone in an office in downtown Toronto.

Our northern communities need growth, and they don't get a lot of opportunities. They don't have the money for asset management plans and official plan updates. That takes time away from their small staff, who have other duties in a scaled-down office. Yet we insist on them doing what the larger municipal staff are expected to do. Flexibility is the key to their success.

You know, Speaker, we also stood up for the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. They said if the bill puts a citizen member on the planning advisory committee, if it's in an area of high agricultural use, they wanted that member to have a farming background. We asked for that, and again we were rebuffed by the members of the government party on that committee.

We asked, again, for more use of more flexibility in our northern communities, just like we asked for communities which had agreements with developers for voluntary fees above the regular development fees to be exempted or grandfathered, and our concerns were rejected. It's all there in the committee minutes in Hansard.

We know, on our side of the House, that leaders at the municipal order of government know better what their community needs are than we do down here in our little bubble at Queen's Park. They know what they can charge by way of development fees without strangling the local home builders and bringing their growth plan to a stuttering halt. They know what they need to pay for growth. They know how to best work with their developers. They know that a cookie-cutter approach which works best in the largest communities won't necessarily work in the smaller ones.

We tried driving home those points to the government members on the committee, but with little success. We tried to convince them to use a section of the smart growth plan to rein in some of the powers being abused by the Ontario Municipal Board, but they would hear

none of that, promising a more complete review of the OMB somewhere down the road.

I've got to tell you, Speaker, the government members didn't think that a lot of the suggestions we made had merit; we thought they did. We supported most of the amendments put forward by the Conservative members as well. That's not to say that we didn't support anything that the government did, because we also voted for pretty well all of the government amendments that they made to the bill, minor in nature that they were. But this bill, as I say—I'll repeat myself: It's a small step in the right direction, and it does merit support. Thank you for your time this morning.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to congratulate the member for Windsor—Tecumseh on his reflections on the amendments that were offered on Bill 73. He took us through a very insightful description of what happens in committees as stakeholders come to present their perspectives on the issues that are outlined in the bill. Some of the things he talked about, particularly related to the issue of growth paying for growth, are very relevant to my community of London. Certainly the discounted services for soft growth, the 10% discount, excluding parks, recreation facilities and libraries, meant a \$5.3-million tab for the taxpayers of the city of London, because the costs for these facilities were not included in the calculation of the development charge.

The member talked about the presentations from municipal leaders who were urging an end to other exempted services from development charges, like museums, like theatres, like art galleries and like park land acquisition. Certainly we know these are the kinds of services that do help communities grow and that should be reflected in the calculation of development charges.

Secondly, he talked about inclusionary zoning and about the number of people who came to committee to urge that amendments address inclusionary zoning. This is a huge issue for my community. We saw an 18% increase in the number of singles and couples with no children waiting for affordable housing. Inclusionary zoning would allow my municipality to increase the stock of affordable housing and address some of those wait-lists.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I wouldn't normally get up to respond to the member opposite, although I was touched by some of his observations. This isn't a perfect bill, right? Sometimes when you're putting legislation in place for 444 municipalities, it's difficult to get everything exactly right. There are always some anomalies. There may well be some way around that that we can look at. Perhaps those that have already negotiated a deal, you know—I'm going to ask my staff to look at that. I'm not going to make any commitment here today, but I'm going to ask them to look at that.

I'm always impressed with the member opposite. He seems to have a good grasp of municipal issues. Not

everybody in this House has a good grasp. My learned colleague from the Tory side is one who has a good grasp of municipal issues and reminds me of my responsibilities all the time, which I'm always appreciative of.

But the bill is, on balance, thoughtful and reasonably comprehensive. It didn't catch everything. It didn't catch inclusive zoning, and it didn't catch long-term housing. There are some things—it didn't catch the OMB—all of which, we would acknowledge, need to be addressed. I think in our conversations, both in the House and privately, I've indicated to the member opposite that we intended to transgress some distance on that in the not-too-distant future.

I wanted to add that note of optimism and to thank the honourable member for his thoughtful comments. I appreciate his critique, always. It was useful for me to hear his words today, which is why I came into the House today.

0930

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm happy to rise and make a few comments on Bill 73.

I would remind the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs that amendments were put forward to make this bill better. Yes, it's not perfect—no bill probably is—but amendments were put forward to improve this bill, and they were refused by the government. And now we're hearing from so many stakeholders, developers, municipal councillors and all kinds of groups in the community who advocate for things like more bicycle parking on properties; they want to see affordable housing in the province. How can that be done if we're not all working together to make sure that happens?

Development fees don't materialize out of thin air. They do not come out of the profits of developers. I think that's the game everybody wants to play here. They come from the cost of purchasing a unit. That means higher mortgage expenses, higher fees, and it means that sometimes people are buying a new property and paying such high development fees—we hear in the neighbourhood of \$60,000—that they don't recoup on resale value. If they have to be transferred a year later and move somewhere else, they could actually end up selling the property for less than they purchased it for and not just have to start where they left off, but they have to start further behind. That makes housing far less affordable.

As far as the parliamentary assistant, he is on record as saying that he supports moving from a five-year review to a 10-year review. I can quote what he said: "So the 10-year review period, I think it's—I know that some of the municipal politicians in my riding, and others, really appreciate that change...." That change wasn't supported by the government. And he said himself that oftentimes, they would do a five-year review just to have to start all over again.

Yes, it's not a perfect bill; amendments were put forward to make it better, and they weren't listened to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I appreciated the comments that were made by the MPP from Windsor–Tecumseh; he basically summed it up. You have to look at this in perspective: We have a government that has been in power for 12 years. For those 12 years, they've always said that they wanted an OMB review. For the last year and a half, they have held consultations on land use planning and development charges, and they have heard every single comment that the member from Windsor–Tecumseh brought forward this morning—they heard those through the consultation.

Then, what they brought forward is this tiny, weeny little bill. Sure, it goes in the right direction when we talk about development charges, but it does nothing to address the long-promised review of OMB. So the member was sort of surprised, because when we opened it up after second reading for deputants to come and do presentations, he heard basically the same thing that had been heard over the year and a half that the consultations took place. Those same issues were brought back.

The NDP put forward amendments to the bill so that what had been heard would be included into the bill. A bill doesn't get—it's not an incremental process. When a bill goes through the House, it is a huge process and they don't come back on a regular basis. Those were not NDP amendments; those were amendments that, for a year and a half of consultations, the people of Ontario wanted to see. Those were amendments that the people of Ontario came to committee to tell us that we needed to do. But the Liberals don't listen. They went ahead with their little bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Windsor–Tecumseh. You have a two-minute response.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'd like to respond to the member for London West. I think she hit it on the head when she started off by saying that growth should pay for growth. That's a concept we should all buy into. If you want to build, you should be paying a fair share of the cost that the municipality has to provide for you to open up that lot.

She also talked about inclusionary zoning. Again, I respect the minister; he says it's going to be coming in his Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy sometime next year.

I really hope that we can all work together in this House, the parties on both sides, and finally come up with—it's just another tool; it's not a magic bullet. But, like I say, if they would have brought it in 12 years ago, when we first started talking about it, we would have had—according to Jennifer Keesmaat, the chief planner for the city of Toronto—12,000 new affordable housing units within the city boundaries. That's just in Toronto, not the rest of the province. So if we can think of that as another tool that'll help us out, we should go for it.

As I said, I have great respect for the minister; his heart is in the right place. I just want him to move a little

quicker on some of the things that we feel are important in this House.

The member from Thornhill, thank you, and to the member from Nickel Belt as well. When we talk about the OMB review, we all know it's overdue. We've all seen the abuses, and we've got to do something about that.

I heard the other day, when they were bringing in closure on other bills, how members say, "Let's get this to committee, where the real work is done." Well, trust me, after my one experience at committee, there's no real work that gets done. You listen to the people, you make a lot of notes—my stack of paperwork on this bill was this high. But when it came time to what we heard, going into the amendments, from the other parties, it didn't happen.

Thank you for your time.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? Further debate? Last call for further debate.

Mr. McMeekin has moved third reading of Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Deferred vote? Okay.

A recorded vote is required. It will be deferred until after question period today.

Third reading vote deferred.

HEALTH INFORMATION PROTECTION ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LA PROTECTION DES RENSEIGNEMENTS SUR LA SANTÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 2, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 119, An Act to amend the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, to make certain related amendments and to repeal and replace the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004 / Projet de loi 119, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements personnels sur la santé, à apporter certaines modifications connexes et à abroger et à remplacer la Loi de 2004 sur la protection des renseignements sur la qualité des soins.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now refer to the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm glad to be back on day two to continue with my leadoff for our party. I guess I have 48 minutes left to continue with my leadoff, and I'm proud to do so.

Yesterday, remember, I had just started talking about how technology has changed and how we continually need to ensure that the legislation to protect the infor-

mation in our computer systems—online, in the cloud, wherever we have it—is as current as possible; and as we move further down the road to implementing a total move to computerized recordkeeping, that we ensure that the legislation is maintained. I'm glad this legislation has been reread in Legislature and that we're actually proceeding in debating it.

As I said, this is the leadoff for second reading. I'm sure we have a few more hours of debate before it goes to committee. We just heard from the member for Windsor—Tecumseh, that when it hits committee, it's kind of, I guess, frustrating on the opposition's part that we partake in these discussions at committee and take notes and, based on what we hear at committee, bring forth amendments to improve and strengthen bills. However, I too have the experience quite often in committee where either the NDP or Progressive Conservative Party amendments are voted down each and every time by the government. It's unfortunate.

But we still have two years and six months left to go before an election will occur, maybe sooner. I'm sure the people of Ontario are hoping for a sooner election. However, we do have that length of time to go, and maybe, by that time the government will be listening to our amendments, because I truly believe that all members of this House do have the capability and knowledge to improve any bill coming forward.

0940

We will continue on our side of the House to bring forth amendments which we think strengthen legislation when they hit committee, and hopefully at that time the government will understand that we do make sense and we are doing it for the betterment of Ontario.

Anyway, as I said, this legislation has been brought forward again. Unfortunately, in 2014 there were 439 cases reported to the Information and Privacy Commissioner's office of breach of information. Again, that's 439 too many cases. We should have a system where there aren't any breaches in the system. That's the standard we want to hit. I know it's probably hard to maintain that or reach that, but it's a goal we should be going toward, and 439 is way too many that would be acceptable.

I did mention last time that Ontario is one of the last provinces to update the legislation to require mandatory reporting of breaches to a privacy body. It's unfortunate, when Ontario is probably the epicentre of Canada and should be the best province, that we are last to put in the necessary provisions to protect our privacy, to ensure that breaches are reported to the privacy commissioner.

We look at eight other provinces that have already passed legislation: British Columbia, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, Yukon. They all have passed legislation on privacy. You look at Alberta and Newfoundland and Manitoba: Those three provinces are leaders that have strong privacy legislation, that have had prosecutions from them. We have yet to have any prosecutions under our legislation, and unfortunately we are one of the last to update our system.

As we modernize health care, as we try to push the government to ensure that health care is patient-centred and it's a priority, we feel that this bill will help improve patient care by protecting patient data, which will increase patient safety.

The Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004, was aimed to protect the privacy of patients; however, as I mentioned earlier, no one has ever been convicted for the privacy breaches. As reporting was not mandatory in the act as it read in 2004, there could be many more than the 439 privacy breaches that we know of that occurred. The only way a prosecution could be launched was if there were reasonable grounds an offence had been committed, and it was left up to the police to determine this.

Even if the privacy commissioner investigates a breach and concludes that it should result in prosecution, a further investigation is still required to determine whether reasonable grounds exist to believe an offence has been committed.

Brian Beamish, the privacy commissioner, has commented to the media, saying that confusion over the roles of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Health and the privacy office has also hamstrung potential prosecutions.

This is not to mention the lack of consistency in hospital reporting. Twenty-seven hospitals in the GTA and Hamilton were surveyed and some said it was not their job, it's the job of the privacy commissioner, while another argued that a police complaint would be a privacy violation in itself.

I think it's unheard of that any hospital in the system does not think it's their job to report privacy breaches. I think that's an embarrassment to our system. People are going into the hospital with the faith and trust that they'll get better, they'll be treated, but also that their personal information will be protected and safe.

I don't know how you would be able to fix the system, or go after perpetrators into the system, if there was no mandatory reporting on the side of health institutions throughout this province. I don't know how you would ensure that we could go into the hospital and be safe—and somebody breaks into our health care system and looks at our data and uses it for whatever it's used for today, and how we could ever fix that situation if it goes unreported.

It's analogous to someone breaking into pharmacies in a city. If the pharmacist never reported that there were continual break-ins to steal, most likely, narcotics in the system, it would continue to go on. But once you report it—in our case we would report it to the police, who would have one of their divisions—they would probably get a better routine of monitoring the pharmacies in said city. If that is never reported, then that situation would never be fixed. The same could be said about the health information system: If you don't report when breaches occur, you can't fix a system to make it stronger and take care of the perpetrators.

Some background information: the Personal Health Information Protection Act was enacted back in 2004. It outlined the privacy policies and practices for health

information custodians in the province of Ontario. Health information custodians, health care providers and organizations in the health care sector must follow these rules when collecting, using or sharing a patient's personal health information.

The PHIPA also gives patients the right to see their health records and correct any mistakes. The legislation also has rules for non-health information custodians, such as insurance companies and employers that receive personal information from a health information custodian.

Health information may include the following: physical or mental health records of the individual; family health history; identification of an individual as a health care provider; plan of service; payments or eligibility for health care; donation of body parts or bodily substances; the individual's health number; and identification of an individual's substitute decision-making.

Back in 2014, we had Bill 78, which was the Electronic Personal Health Information Protection Act. Ontario first introduced Bill 78 in May 2013 to protect the privacy of personal health information that is collected, used or disclosed by health care providers. The bill reached second reading before it died on the order paper in 2014.

The EPHIPA proposed to establish rules for health care providers accessing shared electronic health records. The EPHIPA imposed specific obligations on prescribed organizations that create or maintain electronic health records, including requiring them to:

- take responsible steps to limit the personal health information they receive;

- ensure employees and third parties comply with privacy obligations;

- make available to the public and health information custodians a description of the electronic health record and safeguards to protect the electronic health record as well as any applicable directives, guidelines and policies;

- maintain an electronic health record of all instances in which the personal information in the EHR is reviewed, handled or dealt with;

- audit and monitor electronic health records, perform assessments on risks of the security of personal health information to the electronic health record, and make the assessments available to the health information custodians and the public; and

- notify the health information custodians that provided the personal health information for the electronic health record and the Information and Privacy Commissioner in the event of a breach.

Similar to the lockbox provisions under the PHIPA today, the EPHIPA also allowed an individual to provide to a prescribed organization a consent directive that withholds or withdraws the individual's consent to the collection, use and disclosure of personal information.

The EPHIPA proposed to double the fines for offences under PHIPA from a maximum of \$50,000 to \$100,000 for an individual and from \$250,000 to \$500,000 if it was a corporation.

The EPHIPA would have eliminated the six-month limitation period for prosecution under the PHIPA.

So there have been discussions previously to upgrade the health system. Now, as I said, we have two-plus years left in this current session—unless they come up with a throne speech in the meantime—so the bill is on the table to be discussed, debated and to go to committee and get passed. I think it's important that we do ensure that this legislation goes through and gets passed, because there is quite a bit of—as I said, there were 439 breaches in the last year that were reported, and that's not talking about the ones that may have been missed.

As we've moved into the 21st century, we are looking after and ensuring technology and its protections are in place at the same time. As the electronic health records are going to expand—I know there has been quite a bit of difficulty in development in the doctor's office, but as I mentioned last time, the majority of doctors are now electronic with their data.

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The next step is the sharing of that data and who can access it. As I said previously, we'd love to have the hospitals, the doctors' offices, the labs, the pharmacies and other health institutions be able to share data amongst one another. We need to ensure that when we reach that level—I'm sure, down the line, someone will eventually have coordinated a system where that is possible. If we can reach that level, we need to ensure that privacy is in place. You do not want to say—for instance, you've been in the hospital and given a full and complete history, something that you weren't telling, say, your pharmacy, just because you thought it was none of their business; it probably wasn't any of their business. However, pharmacies are allowed to access that hospital data. There needs to be assurance that they don't go over their boundaries and peek into someone else's history—and maintain the privacy.

I'll go over a few of the known breaches that have come forward and the importance to have the legislation in place to ensure our protection. Health information: Breaches have occurred more than they should. Just a few weeks ago, private health information made headlines when there was a breach. A former Rouge Valley hospital clerk received a \$36,000 fine, but somehow avoided jail time, for selling thousands of confidential maternity records to RESP firms.

You'd think, when someone is breaking in, stealing your data and sharing it, that the end result would be malicious ways where you could frame the person or embarrass the person. But when you look at what happened, in Rouge Valley—they were doing it to improve their own business. She was making money, but the company buying the data was using it so they could focus their advertising campaign on the people who had just had a child so they could increase their business. That's bad. That's breaking the law, in my eyes. It should be banned. But when you think of needing protections in place, you're only thinking that it's to protect from malicious means, whereas it also protects you from unscrupulous business folks who will do anything in their power to make a dollar. We need to ensure that there's legislation put in place to ensure that this doesn't occur.

This person, this hospital clerk, made roughly \$12,000 off the deal. It's unfortunate that that clerk betrayed her patients. After almost 20 years of working there, the clerk admitted to stealing upwards of 12,595 maternity records and providing them to the company, and then they went after the parents to buy RESPs. It's kind of interesting that she only made \$12,000 for selling 12,000 maternity records. I wouldn't say she was a very bright criminal.

Mrs. Gila Martow: You would have made more.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Most business people would have figured that one out. That's a vicious circle that had continued to go on for a number of years. It's unfortunate that those parents received those tactics to buy RESPs. Their privacy was breached. Unfortunately, that's something that can happen all too often. But the person only received a fine and unfortunately no jail time.

Mr. Robert Bailey: But the businesses are safe.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: The businesses? Nothing. Yes, it's something.

As of May of this past year, at Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital four clerical employees were caught looking in the files of 52 patients over a five-year period. Those four employees were only disciplined. In 2014, the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health had five staff members go through the medical records of 22 patients. At St. Michael's Hospital, a clinician posted an inappropriate comment about a patient's behaviour during a procedure on Facebook. A Toronto East General Hospital doctor chatted on a cellphone about the private details of a patient, unaware that the patient's relative was in the same room.

At the end of the day, people get disciplined and moved on. I think we need to ensure—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member knows that's not allowed. I could have you ejected. I think between the two of you, that was totally inappropriate.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Continue.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm sorry I missed that, Speaker.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Me too.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I wish I was watching; I could have seen what was going on.

Mr. Michael Harris: Keep talking.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Thank you. So anyways, they were disciplined, but that was it. That was the extent of it. I think people in this day and age have the understanding that their privacy should be protected.

One other story I want to bring around as well is—it goes back to October of last year. I think this really highlights why we need this type of legislation. We all know about Rob Ford. Last year, stories were breaking about his cancer treatment records. These records were breached on four separate occasions at three hospitals: Humber River, Mount Sinai and the Princess Margaret Cancer Centre. As of July, three of those workers have been charged, thankfully.

I talked about the privacy breaches in maternity wards where everyday people—their information was taken and sold for profit to funnel towards these people, which is terrible. But then you look at famous people who live their lives in the media, such as Rob Ford, who creates news stories each and every day that he decides to create a news story. The fact that somebody thought, "Well, let's figure out what's going on in his private life," where he's having health treatments—something that should be between him and his health care team and that's it. It's unfortunate that there are people out there who will think that this is a great idea, to go after that information. This is what we need legislation to stop.

I'm sure there are people out there who would love to go after any politician's health records and display them for their own personal gain or to the detriment of that politician—people who'd do anything they'd like to do in order to ensure that that career is ended. And it's not just politicians; it could be CEOs of high-ranking companies, it could be a neighbour that you dislike or it could be someone who wronged you in another way. It's something that is out there, and, as I said, there's not enough teeth or strength in legislation currently to probably stop this from occurring.

We hope this legislation actually gets through so that we can catch up to the other provinces and ensure the stories that we heard—either in the maternity ward or with Councillor Rob Ford—don't occur again. No matter what you think of people, no matter what we think about how they operate and what their life is like, their privacy needs to be protected as much as anyone else's. I think it's very unfortunate.

Other topics happened in the news—tragic events such as death or serious disability—that occurred during the preparation of this legislation. The Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004 was being overlooked. There was an upsetting story in the Brampton hospital. Under the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2004, a confidentiality cloak is surrounded by the internal investigation, encouraging health care providers to be upfront with what occurred to ensure an occurrence never happens again. Under this legislation, the only ones involved in the release of information are the health care providers who were involved. No information is given to the families, which leaves them in the dark and looking for answers.

We're waiting for a committee to review the findings on another tragic loss of life. A 20-year-old man had hanged himself while under the psychiatric care of a Brampton hospital. His family has been left with many questions and no answers as the Quality of Care Information Protection Act withholds them. This story brings a lot of questions to mind, the first one being how could this act be written in such a way as to keep the people most affected by the death of a loved one in the dark? As such, changes to the Quality of Care Information Protection Act have occurred under the legislation we are debating today, and has been replaced by the Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2015.

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But that still doesn't answer our questions pertaining to mental health. The tragic loss occurred in a psychiatric ward within a hospital. That means the patient came into the hospital requiring immediate medical emergency care pertaining to mental health, but was left alone in a room. When a patient enters a hospital due to mental health reasons, it's important that they are monitored extensively and stabilized with treatment. Mental health problems are only getting worse across the province as we see, and we're seeing many, many more young people affected by mental health problems.

We just finished committee yesterday on Bill 122, which made changes to the Mental Health Act. That bill came forward because of a court case in the Ontario system that struck down the constitutionality of the bill. Unfortunately, at that time, the government had a year to bring this bill forward to fix this case in mental health, and yesterday we heard—this past week in committee, as the member from Windsor West—

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Windsor–Tecumseh.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Windsor–Tecumseh. I think I'm going to merge your ridings into Windsor West–Tecumseh.

The member from Windsor–Tecumseh was saying how it's difficult in committee to get amendments passed. I sat with their health critic, the member from Nickel Belt, myself and the great member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. We brought forth a number of amendments to the bill; a few were accepted. However, the majority of what stakeholders brought forward was not. The reason why we had so many amendments to bring forward was because, unfortunately, the government created Bill 122; however, they forgot to involve consultations with the majority of stakeholders, who would have had a say and had recommendations to create a stronger bill. I think it was a flawed process, and possibly leading to a flawed policy down the road.

We found that negotiations stopped mid-April and reconvened after the bill was introduced in September. I don't know why we didn't have time throughout the summer months to have consultation with the very stakeholders—I even asked in committee. Perhaps the Canadian civil liberties group—were they not available during the summer? Maybe they took the summer off? Unfortunately, they were available and were willing to have a discussion with them.

It was unfortunate that many of the stakeholders that wanted to undergo consultation for Bill 122 were not spoken to until after first reading, and even the bulk of them were after second reading, after we had debated. We're in second reading right now for this bill, Bill 119, and we're going to pass this bill probably in the next little while. But if you think of Bill 122, with a majority of the stakeholders not present, or not talked to until after all the debate has gone on—a lot of them didn't even know the bill existed. You'd think maybe a message would have been sent out that "We're going to be changing the Mental Health Act." The government took what was in

place from the court's decision, made the necessary changes, but they also changed other aspects of the Mental Health Act in addition to just taking care of the court case.

They had an opportunity to make other changes, and as has been brought up in this House with regard to mental health, the act isn't opened too often. We have a mental health strategy that was an all-party select committee. They came up with key recommendations in order to fix the system, and we're still waiting. We thought that we would perhaps get the opportunity to make the changes necessary when the Mental Health Act was opened. The government said they were rushed, and they had to quickly do it, but they didn't speak to anyone for a number of months. If they really wanted to make changes to the Mental Health Act, if they wanted to make decent changes and improve the mental health system in our province, they had the opportunity. They knew they were opening the act. They could have made the necessary changes and come forth with a stronger bill, with the input of Ontarians instead of the input of a few.

Back to Bill 119: It's interesting, with Bill 119 we're still at second reading, and Bill 122 is already finished committee and is coming back. It's funny; people at home don't realize how some bills get through quicker than others. Sometimes they're time-allocated and rushed through.

With Bill 73, which we just finished, there's a time allocation agreement between the parties to get this bill through. Bill 122 has already done committee; Bill 73 just finished third reading. Politics is interesting; working in the Legislature here is an interesting time. As an opposition member, my job and role is to ensure that we critique the government, and we will continue to do so.

It's about priorities for this province, priorities for Ontario, priorities for our country. Sometimes it's frustrating on our part when the priorities that we share with our constituents are put to the bottom of the list. This government, unfortunately, has their own agenda that we continually see seeping into the system.

I guess Hydro One would be one that the opposition here has brought forward; they didn't even talk about it in their platform. They decided to go forth and sell off an asset, which even the Financial Accountability Officer said is a terrible idea. They've sold 15% already, and perhaps they can stop. There is still time. They've made a little bit of a mistake. Maybe they can stop and hold off selling off any more—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Take the pledge and stop.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Take the pledge; stop the sell-off of Hydro One. Eighty per cent of Ontarians agree that it's the wrong plan to go forward.

We're hoping that down the road, maybe over the winter break that's coming up, maybe over Christmas, they'll get a change of heart, kind of like Scrooge, overnight. I'm not saying the government is like Scrooge but, on the opposition side, we think they are like Scrooge.

Mr. Robert Bailey: They'll get a lump of coal in their stockings.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: A lump of coal is coming.

But anyways, Speaker, I kind of went off track there. Thank you for indulging me as I went off on a small tangent. I'll get back to the bill.

What is this bill going to do? This bill will create an electronic health record system that will enable health information custodians to store and use a patient's health information over an electronic interface. The effortless exchange of health information is designed to improve patient care. It will become an integrated electronic system by creating the prescribed organization as an entity under this bill to manage personal health information in an electronic format and to create and maintain an electronic health record.

I could go off on a tangent and talk about the \$2 billion this government has spent on creating an e-health system that is still in its infancy.

Mr. Wayne Gates: How much?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: It's \$2 billion and still going. That is such a large sum of money to be spent on a system that is still in its infancy. There are so many providers that have gone out of business. There is a lack of compatibility between offices; I can just wait until they try to hook everyone together. It was mismanaged from the start.

I don't know—is it the same minister who created the Green Energy Act who did the eHealth, too? It could have been.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Smitherman.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: George Smitherman?

I'm sure, going forward, this government will say, "That was a different government," because I heard that yesterday with the Auditor General's report. This government actually claimed that it was another government that created the energy mess. It was a minister who was in the cabinet, the Premier who was in the cabinet, when they created the green energy mess, or our energy system mess. They actually came to the Auditor General's report with a straight face and said, "It was a different government, a different Premier."

It's kind of like what they did to poor Chris Bentley from London West. They threw him under the bus, backed over him a few times, and now they're getting ready to throw the rest of the people back from those days—who were their colleagues—under the bus again. They do anything they can to not accept responsibility for their actions. I think that's terrible.

Anyways, I didn't want to go off on that tangent, Mr. Speaker. Unfortunately, I did. I'm sorry.

Back to what this bill is going to do: If a health custodian is in need of retrieving information regarding a patient, the health information custodian can make a request for the information, and then that information will be disclosed. Each time a file is viewed or requested, that information is tracked back to the health information custodian.

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Health information custodians are only permitted to collect personal health information if they are providing assistance in a health-related issue to an individual, or

eliminating or reducing a significant risk of serious bodily harm to a patient or a group of individuals. For example, if a patient arrives at a hospital and is having a serious allergic reaction, this would be a proper time for a doctor to look up what the patient may be allergic to.

This bill is also amended to allow patients to know who has accessed their records by requesting a copy of an audit of who has accessed their files. I think that's pretty key. I think it's very important that people own their own information. It's theirs; it's not the government's, and it's not the health care organization's. It's their information. The government is holding the information for them and protecting it. They should, at any time, know who's peeking at their information and keeping an eye on what they're doing.

This legislation also allows individuals a choice to conceal certain health files or all health files on their electronic health records from being viewed by custodians or prescribed organizations. Again, that's key. As the system grows and gets larger and larger, more people are going to have the opportunity to peek into our files and take a look.

I know people's privacy concerns vary. I have a constituent of mine who wants to be totally offline. It's a hard task because she doesn't want her health card information to be anywhere. She wants to know how to get out. She calls me from a pay phone. It's an interesting thing, and I respect the fact that she's that private, because she's concerned of any breach of her information. And then I've got other people who couldn't care less who knows what about them. This amendment will give them the flexibility to decide who can see what and when and where.

What many Ontarians might not be aware of—maybe we'll have to do a public relations campaign, much like the one we saw yesterday on TV about all these animals on TV, about climate change. The government is reviewing how they're going to fix climate change. It's interesting. They have a polar bear; they have a moose; they have a badger, I think, in that. It's a well-done commercial; I kind of enjoyed watching it.

Maybe when this bill is brought forward and introduced and passed, there can be an awareness, because every Ontarian is going to be added to this list where people can access their data, so maybe we need to get that message out that they can block certain people and groups from accessing their health files. We need to ensure—

Mr. Robert Bailey: We could put the taxpayer as an endangered species.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: That's a good point, Bob.

We need to ensure that these requests to have information concealed are done, so people in Ontario are going to know that, when this bill is passed, everyone in Ontario with a health card's information will be open in the system. There will be nobody blocked from seeing anything yet, so you'll have to make that motion going forward to conceal information that you want to be concealed. So that's a great idea.

When the government wants to spend money on self-promotion, perhaps they could use that money and teach people that, “Hey, you know what? We have protected your privacy information in the health care system; however, you need to come forward and say who can and can’t look at your health care records.” I’d be very supportive of a public campaign in that understanding. I think it would be money well spent on educating people on who can access their information. All that we need to ensure is that people need to be specific in their consent of who can access their information, so there is the opt-out part of it.

Patients can also ask to have their records masked completely, or just from certain individuals. Maybe that’s something you can tie into renewing your health card, because today I might not want so-and-so to access my health records, because maybe I don’t have an understanding.

Maybe I’m a general person in the public, and I don’t want my pharmacist to see certain things, but as I develop my relationship with my pharmacist and realize their strengths in the health care profession, I think they should know that information. In fact, I forget that they can’t access that information because three or four years have passed, and I’m assuming they’re accessing that information, and maybe something down the road went wrong because they couldn’t access that bit of information.

Maybe, when you’re redoing your health card—I just renewed my red and white one. I’m finally updated, Mr. Speaker. Maybe when you renew that, they give you a list of who you want seeing your health care information, and you check it off.

I went, Mr. Speaker, and they asked me about donating organs if I died, because you can only do it when you’re—I guess you could do it when you’re living. But I thought it was really neat because they gave me a checklist of what I want to do, and I became a full donor on Friday. I had never had my health card updated. So I am registered, and I would like anybody and everybody here in the Legislature to sign up and become a donor. It’s an easy process and—

Interjection.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Sorry? I’m done, again, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We seem to meet at this point all the time.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This House stands recessed until 10:30 a.m.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Julia Munro: I’d like all members to help me welcome Ruth Dolan, who is from my riding of York—Simcoe. She is attending today as part of pulmonary arterial hypertension action day at Queen’s Park. Welcome.

Miss Monique Taylor: I’d like to welcome a few constituents here today to question period. Both Sophia Tang and Tatiana Guzman are here on behalf of the Scleroderma Society of Ontario for pulmonary arterial hypertension action day. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Our page captain, Rachael Young, an incredible young lady, is being joined by her mother, Pamela Young; her father, Christopher Young; her sister Gillian Young; and they even brought along a family friend, Beverly White. Let’s welcome them all to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I’d like to welcome the delegation from PHA Canada and the scleroderma society here today, including Dr. Sanjay Mehta from London Health Sciences Centre and Dr. John Granton from the pulmonary hypertension program at Toronto General. Welcome today.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have two friends here this morning, Speaker. Nick Lane is here because of your youth arts program. She’s a student at Walkerville Collegiate—and her father, Mike Lane. Welcome back to Queen’s Park.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I’d like to welcome two brave souls who braved the traffic all the way in from western Mississauga: Joan Paulin and Maria Realejo. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to wish my good friend the member from Northumberland—Quinte West, Mr. Rinaldi, a very happy birthday today.

Mr. John Fraser: We have some members of the Ethiopian community here with us today visiting Queen’s Park. We have my friend Samuel Getachew, Abebe Negash, Girma Desta and Taye Aragow. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I would like to introduce some guests today, in the west gallery for the pulmonary hypertension action day at Queen’s Park: my constituent Nicole Dempsey; Darren Bell, a director of PHA Canada; and Dr. Sanjay Mehta, the chair of PHA Canada.

We also have, from the scleroderma society, Rebecca Wissensz, Maureen Sauve and Ruth Mullin. Welcome to Queen’s Park.

Hon. Bill Mauro: I’ve got a couple of friends from Thunder Bay whom I’d like to introduce to you today, down for constituency office training from my riding office in Thunder Bay—Atikokan: Lindsay Fron—my newest hire, who has been with us for about one month; and Karen O’Connor, a long-serving member in my Thunder Bay constituency office.

M. Grant Crack: Il me fait un grand plaisir ce matin de souhaiter la bienvenue à mes amis dans la galerie est. It gives me great pleasure to welcome three of my constituency staff here today: my executive assistant, Annie Lafortune, and also Sylvie Labrosse and Louise Coughlin here at Queen’s Park. Welcome. You’re here for training. Go.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I’m delighted to welcome to Queen’s Park Janoi Edwards, who is a staffer with me in

Kitchener. He's here for a training session. Welcome, Janoi.

Hon. Michael Coteau: It gives me great pleasure to welcome a constituent of mine, Jeannie Tom, to Queen's Park today. She's here with the pulmonary hypertension action day.

Also, Mr. Speaker, it's an honour for me to welcome Kardinal Offishall. He currently has six records and four Junos, and he was a recent speaker at our culture strategy consultation in Ontario. Joining him today is Jeffrey Remedios, who is the president and CEO of Universal. I have to say, a couple of weeks ago, six of the top 10 Billboard hits were done by Ontarians, and Universal was representative of those artists. They're over there. Stand up, guys.

Hon. Mario Sergio: It is my great pleasure to introduce my extended family to Queen's Park today. Starting with my constituency office—they are here in the west gallery: Loris Fata, Phyllis Arturi and Alessia Fata. From the Queen's Park office, I have Ferd Longo—everybody knows Ferd Longo, Speaker.

Interjection: Best ever.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Best ever—Celeste Bottero, Semia Kandahar, Gianluca Ferrari and Madier Anzari. And some good news and bad news: Sarah Campbell Morales, who has been working for me all these years, is going to greener pastures serving the newly elected MP for Newmarket—Aurora, Kyle Peterson. We hate to see her go, but it's good that she goes because she's a great person and she's going to do much, much better in Newmarket—Aurora.

I welcome them all.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I'd like to have the House welcome the great, talented students from Neil McNeil High School and their civics teacher, Crissy Orr. Welcome to Queen's Park—up the Beach.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I'd like to welcome some constituents from the riding of Northumberland—Quinte West: Alana, her daughter Luisa, and grandpa Pat and grandma Louise. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Today is a very special day because Andre and Marlene Ceci have joined us. They are the parents of Brock Ceci, a wonderful staff member of mine. Welcome.

WEARING OF BUTTONS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister for Children and Youth Services and the minister responsible for women's issues on a point of order.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I believe you will find we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear buttons in recognition of the National Day of Remembrance, and that we observe also a moment of silence before question period with respect to the terrible tragedy that took place in 1989 and the women who were killed that year in Montreal.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent to wear the buttons and to

ask us to take a moment of silence. Do we agree? Agreed.

Could I ask all members and our guests to please rise to observe a moment's silence in remembrance of the tragic events in Quebec?

The House observed a moment's silence.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Pray be seated.

GEORGE STAMOU

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This morning, in the Speaker's gallery, we have George Stamou and his wife, Helen. This is definitely not George's first time at Queen's Park, but it is his last. He has now retired as a photojournalist from CTV. May we welcome him to the throes of retirement. Congratulations, George.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I did have an agreement that he would always take a picture of my good side.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Which one is that? I'm looking for it. Show me that good side today in your leniency.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have a feeling I'm not going to be able to do that today.

It is now time for question period.

1040

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: To the Premier: After yesterday's scathing report from the Auditor General, many on that side of the aisle have a lot to answer for. The AG told us that between 2006 and 2014, the people of Ontario have been overcharged \$37 billion for electricity in global adjustment fees. Ratepayers will be overcharged another \$133 billion in the future. As the Globe and Mail breaks it down, that's over \$12,000 per person; that's \$457 a person per year. Can you picture all the presents that could be put under the Christmas tree? That's a year of hockey in rural Ontario. That alone deserves for the minister to be fired.

Will the Premier do the right thing and fire her Minister of Energy?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First of all, I haven't had the opportunity to say publicly that I thank the Auditor General for her report. As I said yesterday, the job of the Auditor General is to look at government, to look at the way services are delivered, to look at the way government functions, and then to provide a critique of that. That is her job. It's a very healthy aspect of democracy that we have that objectivity built into the system.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to acknowledge that today could be heated, and I'm not going to let it get too hot. So let's just—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I don't need the armchair quarterback either. So let's just pay respect to this, please.

Premier, finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I know that we want to get to the specifics around energy, but I think it's very important to understand that this is a very important part of our democratic process.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: I know it's all nice to thank the Auditor General, but this is 773 pages of an indictment of your government. You may make nothing of this, but this is precious taxpayer dollars.

I'm going to break it down: When it's all said and done, the minister will have overcharged an average household \$32,000 more than they should have paid. With that money, a family could have bought one of the last Windsor-made Dodge Grand Caravans this year. It covers the cost of a Chevy Impala at the GM plant in Oshawa. And \$32,000 is the cost of four years of tuition at the University of Ottawa.

Does the Premier think anyone overcharging Ontarians by this much should still have their job?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just continue, because I think what is important about the Auditor General's report, and all Auditor General reports, is that recommendations are made—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lambton, the member from Dufferin—Caledon, the member from Leeds—Grenville and the member from Renfrew, come to order.

Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Recommendations are made, and is the government listening to those recommendations? There are already initiatives in place to address many of the recommendations the Auditor General put forward. That includes addressing issues around CCACs and LHINs, strengthening the Ontario Energy Board through legislation and introducing a mineral development strategy soon that will bolster the sector. In many cases, we are already acting on the recommendations of the Auditor General.

Yesterday, I would say, as part of the report, the Auditor General said this—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will conclude in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Premier: It's not just the overcharging that hurts Ontario; it's the overspending too. According to the Auditor General, the government could have had the exact same renewable energy

programs if it had listened to the experts. Instead, they ignored the advice, rushed ahead and overspent by \$9.2 billion.

This isn't about the merits of renewable energy; this is about political deals that cost Ontario \$9.2 billion. That happens to be exactly what the government is going to get from the Hydro One fire sale. I still don't understand how this minister has his job over such incompetency.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Be seated, please. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There are 150 countries and jurisdictions right now in Paris talking about how to do exactly what we have done, which is make our energy production cleaner. I think what the minister said yesterday is that we're skating to where the puck is going, not where the puck is.

I want to just comment on what the Auditor General said in her follow-up—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds—Grenville, second time. The member from Lambton, second time.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: On the actions that we have taken, the Auditor General says, "I am pleased to report that 76% of these actions have either been fully implemented or were in the process of being implemented. I want especially to note the exemplary performance of the Ministry of Education, Ontario Power Generation, ServiceOntario and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in implementing recommendations from our audits two years ago."

We listened, we learned and we took action.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Patrick Brown: Mr. Speaker, since I can't get any remorse from the Premier for this indictment by the Auditor General, let's try with the Minister of Energy.

Overcharging, overspending—I see a bit of a trend. It includes overproducing and oversupplying power in the province. Between 2009 and 2014, Ontario's average annual electricity surplus was absurd. Ontario wasted almost as much as Manitoba produced. Ontario has among the highest energy costs in North America, and Ontario shipped away a province's worth of power.

The minister can't seem to get anything right. Can the minister name one corporate CEO who would still have his job after an abysmal mess like this?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I really want to address the issue of the global adjustment and the surplus power, and it does relate to corporate executives. The global adjustment, for example, is kind of a catch-all for costs that are in the system that are not associated with the price of power.

I'm going to use an example: Home Depot. They did 161 conservation projects in Ontario. They removed the

equivalent of 3,000 homes off the grid. The cost of that conservation was put in the global adjustment. The global adjustment represents 3,000 homes taken off the grid. It represents millions of dollars of savings for Home Depot.

The global adjustment serves a good purpose. There are many examples, and I'll refer to more, Mr. Speaker.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, second time.

Supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again to the Minister of Energy: This isn't just in the past. This problem will persist into the future. In the next five years, Ontario will produce so much surplus power, we could power the province of Nova Scotia for five years. I think our own bills are high enough, before we start giving away power for free to other provinces.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader, second time.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Seniors can't afford their hydro bills, and the government just ships our power to provinces at a loss.

Let's be very clear: We are selling power outside of our province for less than it costs to produce. I repeat, we are selling power outside of our province for less than it costs to produce.

The minister has turned Ontario's energy sector into the laughingstock of North America. Will he turn to his right, make the Premier's job easier, and resign?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: When we have surplus power, electricity exports help cover fixed costs that otherwise would have to be paid by Ontario consumers. A lot of people don't understand that, but I have a quote here that makes it very simple, Mr. Speaker. They're going to shout me down because—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I will remind the member from Simcoe–Grey that I have asked many times that we use titles or ridings. So consider yourself coming to order.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The quote says, "Any power we sell to the US, to Quebec, to Manitoba, or power they sell us, is surplus power. It's opportunity power. It's pure profit, in terms that it's power that otherwise would go to waste or not be generated."

That is from the member sitting across there, the member from—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To the Chair, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The other thing, Mr. Speaker, is the IESO—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. We're getting to that point where I'm going to start mov-

ing to warnings, and I will. Once you've been warned, the next time I speak to you, you will be named.

Carry on, please.

1050

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The former PC energy minister says it would go to waste if it wasn't sold and it's pure profit. Now, the IESO last year indicated that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's it. I stand and you stop.

Final supplementary.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Again, to the Minister of Energy: Fifteen years ago, we made money in the energy sector, but because of your interventions, you've made us into the joke around North America.

The arrogance of this minister is astounding. Rather than criticizing the Auditor General, you should listen to the independent oversight.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Chief government whip, come to order.

Mr. Patrick Brown: Let's put this into simpler terms, so that the minister can understand: The government is overcharging an average family by \$32,000 for their electricity needs. They have overspent \$9.2 billion in renewable energy contracts. The last five years in Ontario—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Second time for the chief government whip. I need to hear.

Finish, please.

Mr. Patrick Brown: For the last five years, Ontario has produced as much surplus power as Manitoba could produce in that total time. For the next five years, we'll produce so much surplus power that Nova Scotia could use it for five years combined.

Overcharging, overspending, overproducing and oversupplying: Someone needs to be held accountable. Do you find this acceptable? Do you have any remorse?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, he's comparing a population of one million in Manitoba and one million in Nova Scotia to 13 million in Ontario. How ridiculous is that? It's comparing apples and oranges.

I'll tell you why we have a surplus. In 2020, Pickering is coming offline. That represents 3,000 megawatts. We have to be ready in a short couple of years. That's why we need surplus.

Next, the contracts of some of the original gas plants are starting to come up, Mr. Speaker—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington is warned. I'll gladly put the rest of you on the list. I'm going to hear the answers.

Finish, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Some 3,000 megawatts, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Tell us about the gas plants again, Minister.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nipissing is warned. Who's next?

Finish, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Some 3,000 megawatts from Pickering coming off. Some of the gas contracts are starting to expire and we don't have to renew them. That creates some capacity for us. During refurbishment, 15% of the total nuclear capacity will be out of commission. We're doing wise management, Mr. Speaker—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
New question.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. It is clear from the Auditor General's report yesterday that we need more oversight of Hydro One and the energy system, not less. Can the Premier explain to Ontarians why this year was the last time that the Auditor General of this province will be able to report on Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I have said many times, the broadening of the ownership of Hydro One is motivated by the need to invest in infrastructure in this province. The organization will be a different organization. I think it's clear from the Auditor General's report that there is a need for this to be a better-run company. There are problems with the company that need to be rectified, and that is exactly what will happen. As a result of the broadening of the ownership—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I feel like I'm being challenged, so the member from Renfrew is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There will be new oversight in place. There are different mechanisms in place, but there will nonetheless be oversight and Hydro One will need to disclose information as per those regulations and legislation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's very clear that there are problems at Hydro One, and the way to serve Ontarians is to actually fix the problems. Instead, after years of politically motivated decisions and failure on the energy file, the Premier is waving the white flag, handing control over to private shareholders and simply abandoning Ontarians and hoping the problems will go away.

By selling off Hydro One, is this Premier admitting that she is unable to fix the years of bad decisions her government has made when it comes to this province's energy sector?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the decision that we have made is to invest in the infrastructure of this

province, which will allow us to grow, will allow communities to thrive, will bring investment to the province. That is the decision that we have made. Part of that decision was to look at the current assets that are owned by the province of Ontario, and to leverage those assets in order to be able to make new investments. That is exactly what we're doing.

It is quite clear that there are improvements that need to be made at Hydro One. Those improvements will be made in order to provide better service to the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Oh, there are improvements that need to be made, that's for sure. Hydro One's maintenance backlog has increased by 47% since 2012. Two thirds of the transformers replaced by Hydro One in 2013 and 2014 were perfectly fine. Outages are increasing in this province.

How do we know this, Speaker? Because the auditor can go in, order Hydro One to give her all the information, and she can then make it public, which she did yesterday. But instead of using that information to fix Hydro One, the Premier is selling off Hydro One and hoping that privatization will magically make everything better.

Can this Premier explain why she thinks Ontarians deserve less oversight, less transparency and less accountability in our energy sector, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think it's very important that there be oversight and that there be accountability.

Hydro One, under the new configuration, will be regulated by the Ontario Business Corporations Act, the Ontario Securities Act and the Ontario Energy Board. They'll have to file information with the Ontario Securities Commission. They'll have to disclose the compensation of their top executives. The Ontario Energy Board will continue to have oversight and approve electricity rates. In fact, we've taken action through legislation to strengthen the oversight of the OEB. We've made those decisions to change and to strengthen oversight.

At the same time, the fundamental decision is that we must invest in infrastructure in this province. It is critical to the future competitiveness of Ontario that we make those investments, and those are the investments that we are going to make.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Yesterday's Auditor General's report showed what Ontarians have been feeling in their gut for a long time: The choices that this government is making are not about them.

Can the Premier explain why her government handed out almost 80% of its business grants to companies that didn't even have to apply for them and that they may not have actually needed, while inadequate funding means that seniors are waiting 200 days for the home care that they have applied for and that they desperately need?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First, let me say to the leader of the third party: It's our responsibility to attend to many things at the same time. It is our responsibility to make sure that we work to improve the home care system, to provide services for seniors. That is a fundamental responsibility, and it's one of the things that the health care system is being transformed to do better on.

At the same time, it is our responsibility to make sure that we work with businesses in this province to ensure that they have the capacity to expand, that they have the capacity to move into the 21st century.

I sat with CEOs who are part of the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters yesterday, and they raised the exact investments that we're making through the Jobs and Prosperity Fund as necessary to their ability and their members' ability to make the investments to be able to become part of the advanced manufacturing sector.

If we don't work with businesses—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, it's true that many things need to be done by government at the same time, but it is all about priorities when it comes to government. People want their government to work for all Ontarians, not just the select few. Instead, the Premier is failing to protect the most vulnerable children in our province. They are failing to look after seniors in our province. They are failing to ensure that Ontarians can afford their basic hydro bill.

Will this Premier own up and admit that her government is failing Ontario families?

1100

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me go back to my original comment because I think it's very, very important. There are a number of areas that the Auditor General has looked at. That is her job. It is her job to look at the way government delivers services and it is then her job to critique those. It's a healthy aspect of our democracy.

The important question, once that critique has been made and once those recommendations have been made, is does the government take them seriously and act on them? Absolutely.

In order to assess that, we need to look at the follow-up reports, because those are the reports that demonstrate, when there's a recommendation made, does the government follow through.

Yesterday, the Auditor General said this: "I am pleased to report that 76% of these actions have either been fully implemented or were in the process of being implemented." That's how we learn and we take action.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Five years ago, this government was told that they needed to fix the problems in home care. Five years later, this Auditor General says the problems are worse and not better. So I agree with the Premier: She needs to get to work.

Governments should be able to get the basics, the fundamentals, right: Help the most vulnerable people;

make sure people can afford to keep the lights on and the heat in their homes on; make sure that seniors can actually get home care without waiting for 200 days; make sure that when kids get on the school bus, it's safe, and that when they arrive at their school, their school isn't crumbling around their ears. This is the minimum—the minimum—that people should expect from their government.

How are the Premier's priorities so backwards that she is getting the fundamentals so wrong?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would say to the leader of the third party that in each one of those instances, we are working, as a matter of our policy and our priorities, to make sure we make the investments that are necessary.

There are billions of dollars that are going into the repair, the renovations, the maintenance and the building of new schools. There are, again, billions of dollars going into the building of new health care facilities. We recognize that there is work that needs to be done in terms of the provision of home care. In fact, the Minister of Health is committed to announcing a discussion paper on the future of that system, which is in direct response to the concerns of the Auditor General.

I will be the first to admit that over the last number of years, we have worked to invest in the home care system to make sure people get what they need, but there is more that needs to be done and I think there are structural changes that need to be made.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakubuski: To the Minister of Energy: The minister calls surplus power an opportunity. It has certainly been treated as an opportunity by our neighbours, who have picked it up from you at yard-sale prices.

Energy planning should not be done for short-term political gain. The government shouldn't be intervening in energy day after day to save seats in the Legislature, yet this Liberal government wasted \$9.2 billion playing politics with their renewable energy contracts, \$1 billion playing politics with the Lower Mattagami hydro project and the infamous \$1.1 billion playing politics with the gas plant scandal.

If this government just listened to the experts, like any reasonable government would, ratepayers would have saved \$11.3 billion.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Transportation is warned.

Mr. John Yakubuski: Does the minister think the auditor still doesn't know what she's talking about, or is \$11.3 billion just another Liberal cup of coffee?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm pleased to talk about Lower Mattagami in the first instance. First of all, that project came in under budget and under time. As well, there were comparisons made to the cost of power to Lower Mattagami and other hydroelectric projects. The other hydroelectric projects referred to were built 15, 20, maybe 50 years ago. The capital cost has already been paid.

The other issue is that building a modern facility has tougher environmental requirements and has tougher requirements in terms of accommodating First Nations. There are now the legacy grievances of all the old hydro programs that are now under dispute and will eventually cost money.

It was a good project that created 1,800 jobs, 500 jobs for First Nations, and we make no apology—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I definitely want to make sure I get to the supplementary.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Back to the minister: This isn't about renewable energy, it isn't about climate change; it's about what we could have saved. We could have had the exact amount of those renewables for \$9.2 billion less if you had just listened and done your job.

The energy experts told the minister—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Barrie is warned. If you haven't figured it out, I'm into warnings.

Carry on.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The energy experts told the minister what to do. He did the exact opposite, plain and simple. Now the minister wants to silence energy experts by passing Bill 135, which won't even let the experts bring forward their concerns with your directives that have already wasted \$11.3 billion.

Will the minister listen to the experts and withdraw Bill 135, or does he just not care about the cost of hydro and the people of Ontario?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, first of all, in terms of renewable energy, at the time the previous cabinet, the previous Premier were doing good green things for the province. They looked at the Green Energy Act. They looked at the renewable promise. What they did was, they looked at other jurisdictions: 80 jurisdictions around the world had equivalent prices. They had standard offers. It was not a competitive process. This administration has eliminated the standard offer. It's a competitive process.

There have been no large solar or wind projects approved in this province since 2011. The ones that are out there now in the system are under the old process. It's more competitive, it's less costly, it's renewable energy and it's greening—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. New question.

HOME CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. This morning, right across Ontario, there are thousands of seniors sitting alone at home, waiting for the home care they need. Some of them are in pain, some are at risk of falling, but they've been told to wait for weeks, for months—for some of them, over a year.

Back in 2010, the Auditor General told the Liberals to fix the wait-list crisis in home care, but five long years later, a staggering 65% of home care clients are forced to wait for their assessment.

On behalf of every senior waiting for home care, I have a simple question for our Premier: How much longer will this Liberal government force frail and vulnerable Ontarians to wait for the home care they need now?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I completely agree with the sentiment of the member opposite, that it is unacceptable for people who are in pain, who are frail to have to wait an inordinate amount of time for care, which is exactly why we have been increasing funding for home and community care. We are increasing it by \$250 million over the next three years. That is allowing us to provide 80,000 additional home care nursing hours and to help in the transition of people from hospital to home, because that is when people are at their most vulnerable. Last year in Ontario, the home and community care sector provided service to more than 800,000 individuals.

The reality that we're dealing with is that the demographic in Ontario is aging. We need to do more in order to support people, and that's why we need to make structural changes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The Premier says things, but her actions show that she just doesn't get the priorities of Ontario families. When the Liberals want to sell off Hydro One, things move really quickly, but when thousands of seniors suffer for months on end waiting for home care, the Liberals wait five years and let the problem get worse.

She talks about investing money, but there are things such as: How come, five years later, we still don't have a minimum standard of care? How come, five years later, we still don't have oversight of the private providers of home care? How come, five years later, the wait-list has ballooned, not gone down?

How can this Premier defend five years of inaction, five years of broken promises and, frankly, five years of suffering for the people who needed home care but were on wait-lists?

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Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, because for the last five years we have been working to improve the system: 35 million visits from our personal support workers and nurses, an increase of 1.3 million visits in the last year. The increases have been going up every year, and we've reduced administrative costs. Since the 2010 Auditor General's report, we've decreased administrative costs by 12%. That was money that we were able then to invest directly in front-line care.

In May, we released Patients First: A Roadmap to Strengthen Home and Community Care. We understand that there are changes that need to be made. We have invested more money. We have increased the supports in terms of wages to personal support workers in order to try to deal with the precarity of their work, because we need them as the front-line workers. We know now that

we need to make some structural changes and we will be consulting with Ontarians on that.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: My question is to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services. With the holiday season approaching and academic terms winding down, many Ontarians are planning vacations. During a long winter, a trip to warmer destinations with friends or family can be a welcomed escape. With this in mind, I know that constituents in my riding of Burlington will want to know about consumer protection when it comes to the travel industry. With significant planning and financial investment going into their vacations, Ontarians will be comforted knowing that they will be able to take the trips they planned under the terms they agreed to.

I know the Ministry of Government and Consumer Services takes these concerns seriously and works closely with partners like the Travel Industry Council of Ontario, or TICO, to ensure consumer concerns are well represented.

Can the minister please explain to us how his ministry helps ensure that vacationers are protected from misleading, unscrupulous business practices?

Hon. David Orazietti: I want to thank the member from Burlington for the question and for her advocacy on behalf of her constituents. I certainly appreciate the importance of a family using their hard-earned money for a vacation or a well-deserved break, and I'm pleased with the progress that we've made in this area as one of only three provinces in the country that regulates its travel industry.

Ontario consumers are protected by the Travel Industry Act as well as the travel industry compensation fund, both of which are administered by TICO. Our regulation of travel agents and travel wholesalers adds a level of accountability to the Ontario travel industry.

The same level of accountability cannot be guaranteed with organizations that operate from outside Ontario, so I encourage Ontarians to book their trips or vacations with local businesses.

As a result of the Travel Industry Act, consumers now get full disclosure of pricing, all transaction details are provided to them, they get prepaid deposits protected in a trust account and they're also eligible for the travel industry—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I want to thank the minister for his explanation of the protections that Ontarians enjoy under the Travel Industry Act. I know many of my constituents looking forward to vacations will be pleased to learn that their arrangements are subject to industry-wide oversight, and I will be watching closely for more from the TICO's consumer awareness campaign.

The minister mentioned a series of important regulations put in place to protect consumers. In addition to

learning about these safeguards, my constituents would like to hear more about how our government has worked to level the playing field and ensure a fair and equitable tourism sector.

Can the Minister of Government and Consumer Services please outline how our government has worked with the act to build a safer, fairer tourism market?

Hon. David Orazietti: Thank you again to the member from Burlington. Our government continually reviews trends in industry and identifies areas of consumer concern, adding protections where appropriate. In this regard, we've amended the Travel Industry Act, improving consumer protection by enhancing financial reporting requirements from travel agencies and ensuring trip compensation claims are fair and effective in the event of closures.

The Travel Industry Act has been extremely effective in adding accountability to the travel industry, as TICO includes over 2,500 registered travel agents who fall under the act. As of this past spring, TICO's dedicated reimbursement fund was valued at \$21 million, allowing for payments of up to \$5,000 per person and up to \$5 million per event. Since its inception, TICO has provided over \$13 million in compensation to consumers and has had 39 convictions so far this fiscal year.

I'm pleased with our government's track record in protecting consumers so that all Ontarians can plan any trip with confidence.

HYDRO ONE

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, yesterday the Auditor General revealed that Hydro One has consistently been one of the least reliable among large Canadian electricity distributors. She continued: "In a scorecard published by the Ontario Energy Board ... Hydro One was ranked worst ... of all distributors in Ontario...." Yet in May, your Minister of Energy said, "Hydro One is one of the most reliable companies in North America. It has been recognized as such, as one of the top five."

Speaker, for too long, the Minister of Energy has attempted to keep the House in the dark when it comes to Hydro One. My question for the Premier is: Now that the auditor has revealed the truth, will she accept the truth?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm wondering exactly where the member is going with this question, because we have said that there need to be improvements at Hydro One. There are serious challenges with this organization. In broadening the ownership and changing the way this organization is going to be governed, there actually will be improvements made.

I'm going to take from the question from the member opposite that they actually support the broadening of ownership of Hydro One and the changes that need to be made to the company.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Todd Smith: I can tell you categorically that the answer to that inference is: No, we don't.

Back to the Premier: In May, the minister went on to say that Hydro One, in terms of the infrastructure, is extremely reliable. What we're getting at here, Premier, if you don't understand the question, is the credibility of your Minister of Energy. He says that it's a reliable system. He says that they know how to plan infrastructure. Yesterday, the auditor said that a project that was extending a corridor from the Ottawa Valley to the Peterborough area forgot to include 47 kilometres of roads, three bridges and 35 towers. The auditor also revealed a \$4.4-billion infrastructure deficit at Hydro One because your minister and your government are completely incompetent.

Is it acceptable to the Premier that her minister has either been ignorant of or complicit in the incompetence at Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: At least this question is consistent with the ideology of that party. At least it's consistent with past positions, which are that broadening the ownership of Hydro One—improving the company—would be a good thing to do. Our motivation on this side of the House has been to invest in infrastructure. That is why we are repurposing; that is why we looked at assets; that's why we are broadening the ownership of Hydro One: In order to be able to leverage that asset to invest in infrastructure across the province—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This is a company that needs improvement, and that improvement will happen. But the motivation is to invest in infrastructure that is needed in every riding, in every corner of this province.

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. The Auditor General's report on child protection services in Ontario made it clear that this government is putting our most vulnerable kids at risk. Societies are not always checking the Child Abuse Register before placing children, meaning that even 13 years after the death of Jeffrey Baldwin and while the Katelynn Sampson inquest is ongoing, we continue to place children in homes with people who have records of child abuse. Ontario is taking an average of seven months to complete abuse investigations, when the guideline is 30 days. "In more than one third of investigations we reviewed, safety assessments to identify immediate safety threats to the child were either not conducted or not conducted on time."

Speaker, can the Premier please explain why she is allowing children to be placed in homes when the abuse register hasn't even been checked?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Children and Youth Services is going to want to talk about the specific things that we are doing—the initiatives that we are taking—but this is a perfect example of why it's so important that we have an Auditor General:

that we have those eyes on what government does and what the organizations do, and pushing a government to follow up and to take action, which is what we do.

As the Auditor General said in her follow-up report, 76% of the recommendations have been followed through on; initiatives have been taken. There are things that have happened in terms of children in care that are unacceptable; that is absolutely the case. We are taking action, and the Minister of Children and Youth Services will talk about what those actions are.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Miss Monique Taylor: Unacceptable? What is unacceptable is that report that was given to us by the Auditor General yesterday. We need leadership on this file. We need to immediately remedy these disturbing results.

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Children in care are some of our most vulnerable citizens in this province of Ontario. We have a duty to protect children in care, and this government is failing them again.

To make matters worse, the ministry isn't even ensuring that recommendations following the death of a child in care are being implemented by societies. How is it possible that we aren't learning from mistakes after children are dying in care?

Will the Premier take responsibility for the fact that children in Ontario continue to be placed in homes with convicted child abusers?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I want to thank the critic for raising these very important questions. I think we all agree that the protection and support and safety of our most vulnerable children is paramount to all us.

I want to thank the auditor for her recommendations. While she has recognized the tremendous progress that has been made in the child welfare sector when it comes to the safety and support of our children, there are some serious issues that have been identified. I take these issues very seriously.

With respect to the child abuse registry, I'm very concerned these checks aren't happening as often as they should. My ministry previously issued a directive on this to all children's aid societies in Ontario. I'll be issuing another directive and following up very soon. It's very disappointing that this is happening, and I take accountability to make sure this is followed up on.

When it comes to completing investigations in time, as we've heard from the association, some take longer, some take less time. However—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I stand, you sit. New question.

CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

As you know, Minister, the Maplehurst Correctional Complex is located in my riding of Halton. I often hear from the community of concerns they have about the safety and well-being of correctional officers and inmates in the facility. I know correctional officers in my community and communities across the province work hard every day to keep us safe, and we are grateful.

What many people may not know is that our correctional officers are often faced with difficult challenges as greater numbers of inmates suffer from mental health and addiction issues. It is important that, as we modernize our correctional system, we focus not on building more jails, but instead on addressing these realities and providing better services to help break the cycle of re-offending.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, can the minister explain what he is doing to transform corrections in Ontario?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member from Halton for this important question. The transformation of corrections is a key part of my mandate from the Premier, and something we are working hard on every day.

We are absolutely committed to moving forward with better mental health supports and enhanced rehabilitation and reintegration programs so that we can help break the cycle of reoffending. We have opened the forensic early intervention service, a partnership with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health that is the first of its kind in Canada, at the Toronto South Detention Centre. It provides early intervention forensic mental health services to remanded inmates.

In addition, as part of our transformation, we have launched a comprehensive review of Ontario's use of segregation within our correctional facilities, particularly in relation to its use for those with mental health needs.

These are just a few of the important things we are working on in relation to inmate mental health as we work to ensure we break the cycle of crime and re-offending.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris: Thank you to the minister for your tireless efforts on this issue. I know that Halton residents and Ontarians across the province will be encouraged to see the important steps that you are taking to transform corrections in Ontario. I think your emphasis on providing more mental health supports and a greater focus on rehabilitation and reintegration programs is particularly important.

But, Mr. Speaker, it is also important that the minister work closely with all of his corrections partners to deliver these key programs and services. Staff in the Maplehurst Correctional Complex and other facilities will play a key role in this transformation.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please provide some information on the role he sees for correctional officers as his ministry works so hard to modernize the correctional system?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, correctional officers and probation and parole officers are integral to my ministry's efforts to bring about change. These are our front-

line workers. They are the experts in the field and I wanted to thank them for their hard work and dedication.

We have hired nearly 500 new correctional officers since 2013 and are working to hire more. In fact, we have a class of almost 100 in the Ontario Correctional Services College who are graduating tomorrow.

The recent tentative agreement with the corrections bargaining unit is further evidence of our government's continued support for correctional officers and our probation and parole officers. If ratified, Speaker, it will provide the framework for a stand-alone correctional bargaining unit collective agreement for future rounds of collective bargaining.

Correctional officers are a vital part of the work that is under way to modernize our correctional system. We have a renewed opportunity to work together under this new framework.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday's report from the Auditor General is the last time she will be able to review Hydro One. It's too bad because, as usual, her reports are very revealing. She wrote that the Ontario Energy Board is the "protector of consumer interests," and yet, we now know the OEB wasn't even consulted on the sale of Hydro One.

The minister ignored the OEB and the Liberal government silenced the Auditor General when they voted down the independent oversight of Hydro One. Is the Premier afraid of independent oversight because she doesn't like what it reveals?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Energy Board has a very important role to play in terms of the regulation of the system. The Ontario Energy Board will continue to play that role in terms of setting rates.

The broadening of the ownership of Hydro One was a decision that we made in order to have the capacity to invest in infrastructure. That was a decision that our government made. It is a decision, I believe, that will put us in a very good position in the immediate, the interim and the long-term, because it will mean that roads, bridges and transit—investments that could not have been made otherwise—will be made.

The member opposite is asking me whether I think that we should have asked the OEB. The OEB has a totally different role. That role will remain consistent once the ownership of Hydro One is broadened.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, the Premier's words do not match her action. She did not allow the OEB to participate, to have any feedback on whether the sell-off of Hydro One occurred.

When the Premier wrote the Minister of Energy's mandate letter, she said, "It is of the utmost importance that we lead responsibly, act with integrity, manage spending wisely and are accountable for every action we take."

The people of Ontario have 37 billion reasons to see that the minister has failed in his mandate. It's very clear from the Auditor General's report that the Liberal government has been meddling in the energy file for the past eight years, costing homeowners and small businesses \$37 billion.

Will you finally admit you need to start listening to the AG, the municipalities, the people of Ontario, and stop any further sell-off of Hydro One?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the point I made earlier today and yesterday—that there are 150 countries right now that are in Paris trying to forge a deal that would allow the globe to move to a low-carbon reality. The fact is, the initiative that we took to shut down all the coal-fired plants, to move to more renewable, cleaner energy is a decision that jurisdictions all over the world are going to have to move to if we are going to avoid the devastation of climate change.

You only have to look across this country. Look at Alberta and their plan. They have said that they are going to move off coal. It's going to take them 15 years. The fact is, we're there. As the Minister of Energy said, we skated to where the puck was going and now we will work with all of those countries to make sure that they can take the same kinds of initiatives that we've already taken.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Mr. Percy Hatfield: To the Premier: Good morning, Premier. Yesterday's Auditor General's report on SAMS made it clear that the Premier and her government were well aware of the problems with SAMS but rushed it through anyway. SAMS problems impact our most vulnerable citizens in Ontario: people with disabilities, people who are marginalized and impoverished. Clients with developmental disabilities had their bank accounts frozen when ministry mistakes were made. This is unacceptable.

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More unacceptable still are the minister's prior comments that problems with SAMS could be compared to a BlackBerry glitch.

Speaker, will the Premier explain to vulnerable Ontarians why she rushed the implementation of a computer program she knew didn't work?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Community and Social Services is going to want to speak to the specifics, but I want to say to the member opposite that we know there were problems with the implementation of SAMS. We've acknowledged that. We are working very, very hard to correct that. The minister has been on the front line, has met with front-line workers. There are changes that have been made.

We know there were challenges, there were problems with the way this system was implemented. We will learn from those problems, as we have in other sectors. We will demonstrate that we have learned from those prob-

lems, and we will correct the challenges in order to improve the service to the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I don't know if the Premier knows, but I know that city staff in Windsor caught a SAMS cheque for \$1 million before it went out to a client.

SAMS is forecast to be \$90 million over budget and still isn't working properly.

The ministry had no oversight over consultants. Consultants were overseeing consultants. Front-line workers shouldered the brunt of this disastrous implementation while somehow the minister was unaware of what was going on in her own ministry.

Speaker, will the Premier admit her government is still failing Ontario's most vulnerable citizens?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Of course, we do take the recommendations of the Auditor General very seriously. We have listened to her advice and learned from her report.

We are already addressing all five of her recommendations on her report on SAMS. We have acknowledged many times in this that there were severe and significant challenges with the implementation of SAMS, and this is why, as soon as we became aware of this, we did contract PricewaterhouseCoopers to do an independent review.

We've been working on all of PricewaterhouseCoopers's 19 recommendations. We've developed a transition plan, along with the advice of municipalities, unions and front-line staff. As part of the transition plan, we are already in the process of implementing many of the changes that the auditor is now recommending.

I want to thank all the caseworkers for their patience, and the vulnerable clients who have had difficulties through this transition. We are making—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Perth–Wellington is warned.

New question.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the President of the Treasury Board. I was pleased to see that this past Friday, our government released the final Open Data Directive. This marked a big step forward for open government for our province. With this directive, Ontarians will have greater access to Ontario data, and which will spur innovation, lead to the generation of new ideas and problem-solving through the development of apps.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Could she tell us more about the directive and explain its significance as part of our government's Open Government strategy?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the very hard-working member from York South–Weston for that question.

Speaker, I'm proud to say that Ontario is a leader when it comes to open data. We were the first to launch a public voting tool so Ontarians could vote on the data that matters to them. We received over 30,000 votes. We've now released more than 400 data sets on our open data catalogue, and they've been downloaded over 200,000 times.

As the member notes, last week we released the Open Data Directive. With this directive, we're making data open by default. That means that ministries and provincial agencies must open data to the public unless there's a very good reason that it not be open; that is, unless it's exempt for privacy, legal, confidentiality, security or commercially sensitive reasons.

I look forward to the supplementary, where we'll talk about how we developed that directive.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to thank the minister for that answer, Speaker. I am pleased to hear that Ontario is a leader in this area.

By making our government's data open by default, we will not only promote greater openness and transparency, but also drive open data innovation in our burgeoning technology sector, which will lead to more products, more services and more solutions for government and for businesses.

I understand that the development of the Ontario Open Data Directive represented another first for our government in that we posted a draft online for public feedback. Speaker, I'm hoping that the minister can tell us more about how the people of Ontario contributed to the development of the Open Data Directive and how they shaped the final directive.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As the member knows, the Open Data Directive marks another first for our government. In the spirit of open dialogue, we posted the draft directive online and opened it up for public consultation before we made it final.

We were the first in Canada to open up a draft Management Board of Cabinet directive for public comment, and we did that because we know that when we increase transparency, when we increase accountability and engagement, we get better policy and better outcomes for Ontarians.

I just received a letter from Brian Beamish, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, commending us on this consultation. He said, "I ... want to commend the government on the extensive public consultation it conducted during the directive's development. My office was pleased to participate in these consultations, and provided extensive comments.... I want to thank Brian Fior, director, Open Government office and his team for their positive and open-minded approach to these consultations."

HYDRO ONE

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker. My question is for the Premier. Nowhere in this province is the

government's outrageous and damaging energy policy felt more than in northern Ontario. Yesterday's report from the Auditor General also revealed that Hydro One, which many northern and rural residents rely on, spent \$660 million on smart meters, yet Hydro One does not use the smart meters to detect power outages in the system. The energy minister launched a full-scale attack on the auditor last year when she criticized the smart meters, and it turns out they're not even using them.

I ask the Premier, why does she think it's okay for Hydro One to leave northerners to languish for days on end without power?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, again, I think what the member opposite is alluding to is that there need to be improvements in the way service is delivered by Hydro One to the people in Ontario who are reliant on Hydro One. There are improvements that need to be made in this company. We have made a decision motivated by the need to invest in infrastructure in the province, but also by a sincere desire to see improvements in the company. That's what we will see. Those are the parameters within which we're operating.

I know the member opposite doesn't support the investment in infrastructure across the province that we are making, but, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you—and, through you, him—that there is not a municipality in this province, including his municipality, including North Bay, including municipalities across the north, that doesn't need those infrastructure investments, and they are looking to us to make them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the Premier: Homeowners in the north have seen hydro bills during the coldest months of the year jump literally hundreds of dollars a month. It might be news for the government, but when it's 40 degrees below, turning off the heat is not an option. For many of our most vulnerable, the government is literally forcing them to choose whether to heat or to eat.

The auditor's facts are clear: Hydro One customers have seen 24% more outages from 2010 to 2014; and on my road in Corbeil, they can last for days. I ask the Premier, why are you okay with northerners paying so much more for hydro and getting less and less under this government's watch?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I hope the member opposite, when he is talking to his constituents who call his office, makes them aware of the northern energy credit, which our government brought in to help people who needed support in jurisdictions where they were dealing with high energy costs. I hope he also talks to them about the program for low-income Ontarians that helps to offset the cost of electricity.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that there are different conditions in different parts of the province, which is exactly why we have programs that apply across the province, and we have specific programs that apply regionally, like the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program and the Northern Ontario Energy Credit. They recognize and

acknowledge that there are regional differences around the province.

RING OF FIRE

Mr. Michael Mantha: My question is to the Premier. In the Auditor General's report, her audit found what the people of the north already knew: that despite this province being the largest mineral producer in this country, it was ninth overall in attracting mining projects.

You don't have to look farther than the Ring of Fire to see that. The Auditor General's report found that, since 2010, the Ring of Fire Secretariat, created by this government, has spent over \$13 million and has nothing to show for it. One company throws their hands up in the air and the other is threatening to leave—\$13 million over four years and you haven't even fulfilled your duty to consult with the First Nations in this area.

Speaker, what is this government doing to develop this deposit? Are they only providing busy work for their well-connected friends?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I'm grateful to have an opportunity to speak. I'm very grateful to the Auditor General for her recommendations.

But quite frankly, I think that we're very much geared to strengthening our ministry's operations and mineral sector policies. Indeed, we're going to be moving forward with a renewed mineral development strategy which will actually be dealing with a number of the recommendations that the Auditor General is putting forward.

Let me speak quickly, though, about the work that we're doing in the Ring of Fire. Listen, we support the recommendations, and indeed we want to see a timeline and deadlines put in place. The bottom line is that we're not going to be imposing those when—we're going to make a priority of working with our First Nations. You'd be the first to be critical of us if we did not consult in that fashion. You referenced that yourself.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo is warned.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: That's hugely important in terms of the regional framework that we would put in place, let alone working with the industry. May I say, the opportunity we're going to have now to work with a new federal government, which is very keen to move forward on this—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.

The time for question period is over.

VISITORS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I know that it's already been done, but I want to add my voice as well and encourage everybody in this House to join me in welcoming, again,

the original hip-hop ambassador for Toronto, Kardinal, and his colleague Mr. Remedios.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I'm very pleased that a guest of mine from Peterborough, Mr. Ray March, arrived in the members' east gallery.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Up in the gallery is my very hard-working constituency assistant, Neil Werely. Welcome.

DEFERRED VOTES

SMART GROWTH FOR OUR COMMUNITIES ACT, 2015

LOI DE 2015 POUR UNE CROISSANCE INTELLIGENTE DE NOS COLLECTIVITÉS

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 73, An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act / Projet de loi 73, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1143 to 1148.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gélinas, France	Munro, Julia
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gravelle, Michael	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Naqvi, Yasir
Bailey, Robert	Harris, Michael	Natyshak, Taras
Baker, Yvan	Hatfield, Percy	Nicholls, Rick
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoggarth, Ann	Oraziotti, David
Ballard, Chris	Horwath, Andrea	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Hudak, Tim	Potts, Arthur
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Bisson, Gilles	Jaczek, Helena	Rinaldi, Lou
Bradley, James J.	Jones, Sylvia	Sandals, Liz
Brown, Patrick	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Clark, Steve	Lalonde, Marie-France	Scott, Laurie
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Crack, Grant	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Damerla, Dipika	Malhi, Harinder	Sousa, Charles
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Tabuns, Peter
Delaney, Bob	Mantha, Michael	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Martins, Cristina	Taylor, Monique
DiNovo, Cheri	Martow, Gila	Vanthof, John
Dong, Han	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Duguid, Brad	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McDonnell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Fife, Catherine	McGarry, Kathryn	Wong, Soo
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMahon, Eleanor	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Forster, Cindy	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yakabuski, John
Fraser, John	Milczyn, Peter Z.	Yurek, Jeff
French, Jennifer K.	Miller, Norm	Zimmer, David
Gates, Wayne	Moridi, Reza	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 89; the nays are 0.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I declare the motion carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1152 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Arthur Potts: I would like to have the House welcome three guests of mine from the constituency: James and Patricia Hung, and my good friend Justin Van Dette, who are in the east gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: It gives me great pleasure to introduce to the House two members of my staff from Kitchener Centre who are here today at Queen's Park: Jill Kolb and Janoi Edwards.

Hon. Brad Duguid: It gives me great pleasure to introduce a couple of good friends of mine: Rohit Singh, who actually works in the constituency office of Chris Ballard, our colleague up in Newmarket–Aurora, and John Souri, who works in my constituency office. Gentlemen, thanks for being here.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'll introduce them, but they're on their way up to the gallery. I'm pleased to introduce the grade 5 civics class—I think this is them walking in—from St. Ignatius of Loyola Catholic School in my great riding of Scarborough–Rouge River. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HALTON COURTHOUSE

Mr. Ted Arnott: As the government begins preparations for next year's budget, I rise in this House once again to underscore the need for a new courthouse in Halton region.

The current Halton courthouse, which was built more than 50 years ago, is aging, overcrowded, unsafe and inadequate to meet the needs of our rapidly growing region.

I toured the courthouse on September 10, 2014, and participated in a town hall meeting with lawyers, judges and other courthouse users later on that day. I told them I would do what I could to help.

I've raised this issue in debate in this House and in question period. I've written to the Attorney General, and I've spoken to her many times. I even initiated a meeting with the Attorney General and all the Halton-area MPPs on September 8. I also discussed the need with the Minister of Finance and the President of the Treasury Board last month, asking for their support.

The Attorney General assures us that a new courthouse for Halton region is a priority for her ministry. I thank her for the interest she has shown to date and urge her to keep pushing.

The fall economic statement showed that the government has allocated \$243 million for justice infrastructure for this year. That's up almost \$100 million from last year. Where is the Halton courthouse in their long-term infrastructure plan?

Halton region needs a new courthouse. I am prepared to reach across the aisle and work with the other Halton-area MPPs. Let's work together and get this done.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: As you know, many members are signing Christmas cards this week. I didn't do that, so I have to make do with this:

'Twas Christmas week and the members were busy in their ridings—as always—

Only security and the legislative ghosts walked the Queen's Park hallways.

Spirits, which were seen, were captured for Clerk Deller

And locked back up in the attic or down in the cellar.

This month, the time seems to go by pretty fast.

But there has been a sighting of a ghost of Christmas past—

Dalton's been "Making a Difference"—at least that's the title of a book he's been hocking ...

Might be better than a lump of coal in a Liberal stocking.

Patrick, north of Simcoe, has no time to dally ...

As west of Don Valley, Kathleen was seen at a Whitby–Oshawa rally.

No wait, please wait, I'm not done yet—

I want to get in a plug for a poet laureate.

And I would like a final thought or two to be entered—

Before I get the hook by my leader Andrea from Hamilton Centre.

Obviously as a wordsmith, I'm no skilled artisan ...

But this message is non-political, non-partisan.

Happy Hanukkah to some; season's greetings to all.

It shouldn't be hard, Speaker, as in this hall you can plainly see,

This has been your Christmas card from the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There's no truth to the rumour that you're applying for poet laureate.

GURU NANAK DEV JI GURPURAB

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: On November 25, the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, the Honourable Bill Mauro, and I had the opportunity to attend the Gurpurab, Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birth celebrations, at the Ontario Khalsa Darbar Sikh temple in my great riding of Mississauga–Brampton South.

Born in 1469, Guru Nanak Dev Ji was ahead of his time. He had an extraordinary insight. He proclaimed, "There is but one god, the supreme truth; the ultimate reality, the creator, without fear, without enemies, timeless in his image, self-created, by his grace revealed."

He believed in justice for all and in values such as equality, compassion, tolerance and universal love and respect. He rejected the dreaded caste system and advocated for an inclusive and just society.

Today, we talk about gender parity. More than 500 years ago, Guru Nanak Dev Ji said:

Remarks in Punjabi.

"Why should we call a woman inferior when it is she who gives birth to kings?"

Guru Nanak Dev Ji's teachings and philosophy are even more relevant in the times we live in.

LAND TRANSFER TAX

Mr. Michael Harris: When is a Liberal-government pocket-fleeing tax not a tax? When it's met head-on with a wall of opposition and inbox-exploding email campaigns that awaken government to the absurdity of their dream-crushing tax plans.

This week we saw one of the quickest U-turns in history when the municipal affairs minister bowed to the demands of the municipal land transfer tax opposition motion tabled by my colleague from Leeds-Grenville just two days before it was debated. It took a massive wave of e-opposition and weeks of pushing in this House to break through, but, in the end, the minister simply couldn't stand up to the outcry against the expansion of the municipal land transfer tax.

The about-face by the minister was a testament to the true democratic power of the people in rising up to oppose wrong-headed proposals that would crush the dreams of those looking to buy a home. It was a victory for all those who stood against the proposal that would have seen people in my area of Kitchener-Waterloo forced to pay up to \$10,000 to realize their dream.

After refusing my colleague's repeated request to shelve any plan to expand the municipal land transfer tax, it was heartening to see the united voices of the people finally being heard when the minister climbed down, only days before he would have been forced to defend what he obviously realized was simply bad policy.

Speaker, I want to recognize all who refused to sit silent while government dug further into our pockets: to the home builders, the real estate agents, and those who raised their voices in MPPs' email boxes.

RIDING OF NICKEL BELT

M^{me} France Gélinas: We all know that Christmas is right around the corner, so I want to share with you my Christmas wish list for Nickel Belt.

First, I wish that no train will derail, explode and spew hundreds of litres of crude into the river, like what happened on March 7 in my riding in Gogama. I wish

that the oil would stop coming up the Makami River in Gogama. I wish that the people of Gogama would get support from their government and be fairly compensated. I wish that somebody would tell me that it is safe to eat the fish.

My fifth wish is that the northeast continues to have a search-and-rescue helicopter based out of the Sudbury airport. This way, we can ensure the safety of our hikers, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers. I wish that, if government is doing a review of this decision, that the terms are referenced in minutes and who worked on that, because the elf in my office has filed freedom-of-access-of-information requests, but nothing is coming back.

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I also wish that the people living along Highway 69, where the blasting is happening for the widening of the highway, get fair compensation when their houses get destroyed by that blasting.

Lastly, I wish that the people of Wahnapiatae First Nation don't have to drive through two ridings—hours and hours of driving—to get service from their MPP, and that they get moved back into the riding of Nickel Belt, like at the federal level, where they belong.

SOBER STEERING

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I rise to actually deliver some positive news from Kitchener-Waterloo. As you know, in my riding of Kitchener Centre, the tech sector is flourishing. Today, I'd like to share with you news of a tech start-up that has developed a remarkable innovation that's designed to keep kids and drivers safe on our roads.

Sober Steering is the name of this company, and they've produced a new sensor technology that could make Breathalyzers obsolete. Here's how it works: Sober Steering uses a biosensor in the steering wheel which detects the driver's blood alcohol level. To start the engine, you have to put your palms on the steering wheel, and the sensor measures alcohol in your system through the skin. If alcohol is detected, then the engine won't start.

The company's chief operating officer, Catherine Carroll, says this technology could revolutionize the way that we monitor drinking and driving.

Sober Steering is currently targeted for school buses, but it could also be used on public transit, construction machinery and so much more.

I'm pleased to tell you that Sober Steering got off the ground in 2009 with an investment from this province. Researchers at the University of Waterloo helped to develop the technology.

Currently, there are three school bus companies in Waterloo region that are testing the system in a pilot project.

This company, I believe, has a very bright future, and I'm so proud of the people who work there and all the other innovative businesses in my region that are developing creative solutions and creating jobs.

HANUKKAH

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'll continue the tradition with a little poem:

The holiday of lights is here
 Good friends and happiness to share
 Sweets with honey for us to eat
 Candles to light and friends to greet

One little candle, two little candles ... all the way to eight little candles to celebrate the eight days of Hanukkah, which is going to be upon us this Sunday, December 6, at sundown, because the Jewish holidays pretty much always start at sundown the night before.

Actually, I've never heard this little poem before, because it's not an English Hanukkah song, a Yiddish Hanukkah song or a Hebrew Hanukkah song. It is actually from a Spanish Hanukkah song, which is called Ocho Kandelikas. You can imagine how it goes: "Una kandelika, dos kandelikas"—and "kandelika," we all know, can be translated easily into "candle."

So I want to remind everybody here that, yes, Hanukkah is being celebrated, but the Jewish community is not just here, obviously, in Ontario. It is found all over the world in every culture and pretty much every language. That means people will be singing Hanukkah songs in every language across the world, starting December 6 this year, since it follows the Jewish calendar, which makes adjustments, as we all know, and likes to confuse everybody, including the Jewish community.

Chag Sameach. Happy Hanukkah. I'm looking forward to celebrating with people in Thornhill. There are many events going on all over the GTA, Ontario, Canada and the world. Chag Sameach.

ONTARIO SENIOR
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I rise today in this House to recognize the outstanding seniors who are this year's Ontario Senior Achievement Award recipients. Ontario acknowledged 21 outstanding seniors for their significant contribution to their communities and to the province. The Ontario Senior Achievement Award recognizes individuals who have made exceptional contributions to their community after the age of 65. It is the highest provincial honour for seniors.

It is important to acknowledge that in 2015, for the first time, there are more seniors 65 and over than children under 15, both in Ontario and across Canada. In Ontario, there are currently more than two million seniors, and this number is expected to double in the next 25 years.

The awards were presented at a Queen's Park ceremony by the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, and the Honourable Mario Sergio, the minister responsible for seniors affairs.

I'd like to highlight a recipient of the awards, who is my constituent from York Centre. Ekaterina Lotkina is an active volunteer with the Jewish Russian Community

Center of Ontario. She is responsible for the mailing operations of the organization, making sure that thousands of letters, birthday greetings, invitations and tax receipts are prepared, signed and delivered on time.

As Ontarians, we should take inspiration from these seniors who have made such diverse contributions to their communities. They are a constant reminder that life is long and that no matter the age, the potential to bring about positive change is always possible.

PATRICIA HUNG

Mr. Arthur Potts: It's my pleasure to honour Patricia Hung today, a constituent of Beaches–East York and the first-ever Parkview Hills Citizen of the Year.

Now the Parkview Hills Community Association has represented the residents of Parkview Hills in the northwest corner of my riding for the past 25 years. Until just a few weeks ago, it was headed up by my good friend Justin Van Dette for the last seven years. Before exiting as president, he launched the Parkview Hills Citizen of the Year Awards and also helped kick off a \$25,000 campaign for the Toronto East General Hospital, which, as you may have heard recently, has changed its name to the Michael Garron Hospital as a result of a \$50-million donation by the family to the hospital.

Congratulations, Justin, on your very successful tenure as president. We're glad that you're staying on the board. I also want to offer best wishes to Lee-Ann Reid, the new association president, and to the rest of the board.

But let's just talk briefly about Patricia. A self-declared do-gooder, she is a police officer, an author, an inspirational speaker and a tireless volunteer who has been helping our community for decades. After the tragic loss of her daughter Stefanie in 2008, Patricia began the healing process by helping others. From holding workshops and sitting on victim advisory committees to contributing to her blog, Joy in the Aftermath, Patricia has been helping families who have been impacted by tragedy find hope. In 2012, she also launched the Quality Care Employment Agency, a volunteer organization which recruits live-in caregivers for children, the disabled and seniors.

Please join me in congratulating Patricia on her well-deserved award: Parkview Hills Citizen of the Year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Congratulations.

Thank you to all of the members who have made statements today.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE
ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Grant Crack: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Mr. William Short): Your committee begs to report the following bill, as amended:

Bill 122, An Act to amend the Mental Health Act and the Health Care Consent Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 122, Loi visant à modifier la Loi sur la santé mentale et la Loi de 1996 sur le consentement aux soins de santé.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The bill is therefore ordered for third reading.

MOTIONS

SIGN-LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the use of sign-language interpreters in the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The deputy House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Deputy House leader.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that on Thursday, December 3, sign-language interpreters may be present on the floor of the chamber to interpret the proceedings during ministerial statements and responses.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Hon. Brad Duguid: I have a statement here to read on a very important day that we're celebrating today, but I have to make a quick comment on the statement made by my colleague to my right about seniors' awards. One day he may be eligible for seniors' awards as well, but he's far too young for that now. It's good to hear that statement.

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Now, for the business ahead. Thank you to all of you for your unanimous consent to allow our speech interpreter to be here with us in the Legislature today. It's very much appreciated.

I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the United Nations' International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The theme this year is "Inclusion Matters" and the focus is "access and empowerment for people of all abilities."

Inclusion, access and empowerment inspire my ministry's work every day. We made these values part of the

law when we introduced the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 10 years ago. That law made Ontario one of the most inclusive jurisdictions in the world, a feat that I think all of us here in this Legislature can be very proud of to this day.

Mr. Speaker, this year was the 10th anniversary of Ontario's landmark accessibility legislation. It marked a halfway point on our journey towards an accessible province. I was pleased to enhance this milestone by launching our accessibility action plan.

Ontario's Accessibility Action Plan focuses on three key priorities:

(1) engaging employers to hire people with disabilities;

(2) building on our accessibility laws and our standards;

(3) promoting Ontario's cultural shift to build awareness of accessibility.

In order to move closer to our goal of inclusion by 2025, we hosted the most accessible Pan and Parapan Am Games in history, Mr. Speaker, and we're very proud of that. We hosted the first-ever Accessibility Innovation Showcase, and we benefited from the leadership of our special adviser, the Honourable David Onley, a globally recognized champion of accessibility.

But government cannot achieve inclusion working in isolation. We must also foster a cultural shift within individuals. That's why I'd like to highlight the work of a couple who has been working toward this cultural shift, and I know they are watching today on TV: Andy and Jackie Speers of Fergus, Ontario.

As the parents of a child with a disability, the Speers saw the need for an accessible playground in their neighbourhood. Eventually, through their hard work, they raised \$200,000 for a playground in Fergus and a further \$1,000 for another one in Elora. Those playgrounds are now the centre of their communities. The work they have done goes on and on and continues, and they're working on many important projects today.

My ministry's goal is to provide those who are inspired by them with the tools necessary to affect change towards inclusion. One such tool will be Ontario's Accessibility Certification Program, which will make it easier for people to identify accessible businesses and organizations.

We're working on other fronts as well. We just launched another program to help promote inclusive workplaces, our Community Loans fund, a partnership with leading financial services institutions which will encourage businesses to tap into a talented pool of people with disabilities. This program provides discounted rates on financial products like loans to small and medium-sized businesses that commit to hiring people with disabilities.

Studies show that workers with disabilities have higher retention rates, take fewer days off and possess unique insights and skills that make a workplace and a business more productive. Yet 70% of small businesses say they have never hired someone with a disability. I

believe this fund is one way to break through that barrier to employment and encourage businesses, large and small, to open their doors.

I also believe that enforcement remains an important part of our efforts to increase compliance. We've strengthened our efforts and instilled some techniques, learned through the years of experience at our Ministry of Labour. We are still in the midst of conducting enforcement blitzes and we're working on ways to better respond to common complaints through our enforcement efforts.

Following our last awareness campaign in the fall of last year, we saw a significant increase in compliance. In fact, compliance more than doubled. At the same time, it might not be through compliance alone that we achieve our targets, but also through technological innovation.

This point was driven home for me at the Accessibility Innovation Showcase this past summer. There I met a mother who was able to see her baby for the first time because of new technology. She now works for the start-up that developed that technology.

More than 50 companies and organizations demonstrated their innovative accessibility technologies during that showcase.

As we observe this special day, let us all commit ourselves to continuing our efforts to be global leaders. Let us show the world that an Ontario without barriers is one without limits.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: I rise today to join my colleagues to mark the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This internationally recognized day helps increase awareness of the importance of ensuring people with disabilities have access to every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

It also reminds us that every government should prioritize the inclusion of people with disabilities and act as a leader for the rest of society.

In Ontario, one in seven people has some type of disability, which is nearly two million Ontarians. We recognize that people with disabilities have long faced barriers that limit participation in our communities. Our province is stronger when barriers to inclusion and accessibility are removed, and when everyone has the opportunity to find work and contribute to the province's growth.

I'm proud that Ontario is a Canadian leader in accessibility. We are the first in the world to move to a modern regulatory regime that mandates accessibility and requires our staff to be trained on accessibility. We were the first Canadian province with legislation that set out a clear goal and a time frame to achieve accessibility in public, private and non-profit sectors by 2025.

June 2015 marked the 10th anniversary of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Today, we also posted the 2015 report on the Canada-Ontario Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities. This agreement reflects our shared commitment to

support employment programs for Ontarians with disabilities, including social assistance clients and post-secondary students with disabilities. Beginning in 2014, this agreement provides Ontario with \$76.4 million over four years to support employability and employment for people with disabilities. It also allows Ontario to continue successful programs that help remove barriers for people with disabilities so they can seek training, find jobs and build careers.

Our commitment to inclusion is at the heart of our work on developmental services. In 2014, our government reinforced this commitment through our investment of \$810 million over three years to spur innovation and transformation in community and developmental services. Part of this \$810-million investment is providing direct funding to thousands of people so they can participate more fully in the community, offering more choice and flexibility of supports than ever before.

For example, because of this investment in the past year, 14,000 individuals and their families received new direct funding through the Passport and Special Services at Home Programs. This direct funding is empowering people to determine the best use of these investments for their personal circumstances.

We know there is no one-size-fits-all housing solution for adults with developmental disabilities. That's why as part of our government's commitment to inclusion, choice and independence, we have launched the Developmental Services Housing Task Force. Through the hard work of agencies, families, community partners and housing task force members, we are piloting new residential support partnerships across Ontario.

Twelve projects selected by the task force from the first call for proposals are already under way. The housing task force will be launching its second call for proposals later this month. Lessons from these projects will be used to assist with developing new housing solutions across the province and improving the existing developmental services system, including reducing waitlists for housing and residential supports in a timely manner.

In addition to supporting individuals with disabilities in their home and community, our government is also helping people to pursue a successful place in our province's workforce. We understand that a job is not simply a potential path to financial security, it's one of the best routes to social inclusion. Our plan promotes inclusive work environments and opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to find competitive employment, develop successful job skills and contribute to the growth of the province.

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It is motivating to see the roots of inclusion already planted in Ontario. For example, several projects under our employment and modernization fund, a \$4-million project launched in 2014, involve shifting away from traditional settings to community-based employment.

We are creating a new Centre for Excellence in Employment Services for people with disabilities. The

new centre will provide resources to help local community agencies enhance their employment programs, build community networks and conduct employer outreach.

The Community Living Sarnia-Lambton Tools for Transition project is developing summer employment and pre-employment training tool kits for developmental services agencies.

Mr. Speaker, partnerships among government, families and communities are crucial to building a truly inclusive, supportive society. I extend my thanks to all of the leaders in the disability sector, including the Provincial Network on Developmental Services and March of Dimes Canada, who are here today, for being important partners in building inclusive services for people with developmental disabilities. Together, we will build Ontario up, create new opportunities and champion a secure future for people with disabilities across our province.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, 30 years ago, the United Nations General Assembly designated December 5 as a day to celebrate the contributions that volunteers make around the world. I'm proud to recognize the incredible efforts of volunteers in our province on both a global and local scale.

More than five million Ontarians generously donate their time and talents every year, strengthening their communities and helping to create a vibrant and inclusive society. The Ontario government formally recognizes volunteers through a number of programs, including the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards, the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers, the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award for Voluntarism, the Ontario Medal for Good Citizenship, and the Ontario Senior Achievement Awards.

Speaker, it is an honour to pay tribute to our incredible volunteers. Not only do their efforts make our communities better, but they make a real difference in our way of life.

We are fortunate in Ontario to experience the power of volunteering first-hand. For example, this past summer, 23,000 volunteers played a pivotal role in making the 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games a resounding success. And since 2008, more than 180,000 young Ontarians have taken part in volunteer activities across the province through ChangeTheWorld Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge.

We also know that volunteers will continue to play an important role as Ontario welcomes its share of Syrian refugees arriving in Canada. I'm proud of how Ontarians have reached out during this humanitarian crisis. Thank you to all those Ontarians who have already offered to help, from engaging in private sponsorship to volunteering and supporting organizations working with refugees. For those who want to learn more about what they can do, I encourage them to visit Ontario.ca/syrianrefugees.

Our government has been working on an action plan to strengthen volunteerism across the province. Through

our plan, we will work together with partners across all sectors to strengthen Ontario's volunteer base. We will raise awareness of volunteering and promote its value in our society. And we will work to enhance the volunteer experience.

My ministry is working on these and other initiatives to help ensure that our province is home to a strong, diverse and energized volunteer base.

Speaker, volunteers are the heart of our communities. They make our economy stronger. They touch the lives of Ontarians each and every day, and they are an essential part of life in Ontario.

I encourage everyone to join me in showing appreciation for our province's amazing volunteers on International Volunteer Day and to thank them for everything they do.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Hon. Brad Duguid: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure is standing on a point of order.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Just to correct my record, Mr. Speaker, my legislative assistant, Aleks Dhefto—you'd better be right on this—said that when I was talking about the Speers's contributions or the work that they have done and the money they have raised, I said it was \$2,000 for a playground in Fergus and \$1,000 for a playground in Elora. It's \$200,000 for a playground in Fergus and \$100,000 for another one in Elora in the fine riding of our colleague the member for Wellington-Halton Hills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The member is correct that you can correct your record—and he did say \$1,000.

It's now time for responses.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I am pleased to rise today in celebration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This year marks the 23rd anniversary of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, which was designated by the United Nations General Assembly. We observe the International Day of Persons with Disabilities to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.

The theme for 2015 is Inclusion Matters: Access and Empowerment for People of All Abilities. This includes equal access to transportation, employment and education, as well as social and political participation.

I would like to take a moment to recognize our former Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable David Onley, who has championed accessibility in all areas of his life. His work has helped many people across the province.

There is no doubt that Ontario has come a long way in improving access and opportunity for all individuals. However, there is much more to be done.

One urgent area of improvement is housing. I hear from parents and families, both in Perth–Wellington and across the province, who cannot find appropriate housing for their children. Access to residential supports for individuals with disabilities must be improved, and it must be done now.

I would like to recognize the outstanding agencies that provide inclusive programs and housing across our communities. Your services are invaluable. These agencies need the government's support and partnership. They need budgets that allow them to address the needs in their community.

Finally, I would like to extend my utmost respect for families, as they are truly the front lines when it comes to inclusion and empowerment. They support their loved ones, encourage them every day, and help them reach their full potential. To everyone who participates in our communities, overcomes individual hurdles and shares their abilities, we take a moment to say thank you.

Projects like those playgrounds in Fergus and Elora are perfect examples of community involvement. Let's all work together to ensure our communities are accessible and that everyone has the resources to accomplish their goals.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today to mark International Volunteer Day.

We all know that volunteers are the heart and soul of Ontario, and we're incredibly privileged to live in a province where civic pride and volunteerism form the bedrock of our communities. It does contribute to such a beautiful social fabric and unites us across our vast geography and diverse backgrounds.

I also want to recognize the almost five million volunteers in our province who demonstrate exemplary self-sacrifice, putting the needs of others above their own. Almost every single event in our communities is supported by volunteers. Whether it's the parades, the festivals, the hospital auxiliaries, the fundraising foundations, people coaching our athletes, or our many service clubs, volunteers are part of the reason we have such a vibrant and healthy community, and they speak to a very deep Canadian pride that often goes unnoticed.

In 2010, more than 13.3 million people volunteered and Canadians devoted 2.1 billion hours to those activities, which is in a report from the TD Bank that I found. All those hours combined are equal to 1.1 million full-time jobs, or 8% of full-time jobs in Canada. I just think that's a statistic that we all should be so proud of.

I also want to say, as critic for citizenship, immigration and international trade, that I'm certainly proud of all the communities and the private sponsors for stepping up to the plate and accepting Syrian refugees into their homes and communities. I think it shows the great compassion that we as Ontarians and Canadians have.

1340

I have said on many occasions in this Legislature and at my community events how proud I am to live in a province and a country where we have a place of opportunity for everyone. I think that just strengthens our diversity and it helps us all succeed in this globalized world.

A favourite part of my job, of course, is thanking all of the volunteers in all of our communities and across the province. I don't think I could ever thank them enough.

I want to share my time with the member from Halton Hills who wants to say a few words.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Ted Arnott: I too wish to respond to this important statement today in recognition of the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and thank the Minister of Economic Development for acknowledging my constituents in Centre Wellington, Andy and Jackie Speers, and the whole community that got behind the idea of the need for accessible playgrounds. It's an amazing community success story. I would invite the minister to visit my riding to see for himself what's been done. I cordially look forward to greeting him when he visits my riding.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to join my colleagues to speak on behalf of our party, the Ontario New Democratic Party, to recognize the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. It's a day where we acknowledge the challenges and the triumphs that people with disabilities face in our province, in our country and, indeed, around the world.

As the brother of someone who has a disability, I know full well—our family knows full well—the challenges that families specifically face when having to support someone with a disability, and also the triumphs: those achievements that can go with proper support, proper family dynamics and the wonderful contribution that people with disabilities can make, given the resources.

Speaker, there are certainly some barriers that continue to exist: employment barriers, social exclusion, family stress, economic insecurity, physical and emotional strain. I would be remiss if I didn't talk about people who are advocates for people with disabilities that have been incurred through workplace injuries. These are people who struggle each and every day for some of the basic, most fundamental supports that it is our responsibility to provide through this Legislature and through the measures of the province.

There are folks in every riding that do a lot of great work. I want to recognize Michelle Jones-Rousseau from LaSalle who last night was awarded the AODA Anniver-

sary Champion Award for her work with the Amherstburg Heroes Athletic Club. She is also involved with the Special Olympics and is a former member of the Amherstburg accessibility committee. She's doing wonderful work.

I would like to also give a shout-out to somebody who watches this place regularly. From Sudbury, he's a friend of those in the NDP caucus: Robert McCarthy. Robert just posted on Facebook that he wants us all to remember that there is really no such thing as a disability; he would like us all to refer to it as a "diffability." It is a different ability—things that those who have those challenges face have just a different way about getting around it. And we can all do our part, as Robert has and as Michelle Jones-Rousseau has, to raise awareness, support those in our communities who have disabilities—diffabilities—and raise the bar so that, collectively, we all benefit as a society in helping one another.

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am always proud to stand in this Legislature on behalf of my constituents in London—Fanshawe and I'm glad to be here to recognize and celebrate International Volunteer Day. For International Volunteer Day 2015, I am honoured to have the privilege to acknowledge special individuals in my riding who are engaged in volunteering their time, energies and skills to change the world for a better future. Their contributions have made a real difference.

One of these individuals is Margery Sherriitt. Margery has volunteered with more than 10 local organizations since the age of 65. Among her many contributions is her work as co-chair of the transportation working group of the Age-Friendly London Network, where she implemented a three-year action plan to improve access to affordable transportation for seniors in London. I would like to extend my congratulations to Margery as she was a recipient of the Ontario Senior Achievement Award this year.

Another exceptional London volunteer is Jacqueline Fraser. She is a prominent member of the London community and spends countless volunteer hours making change in northeast London. For several years she has spearheaded events and initiatives through the North East London Community Engagement project which hosts monthly community conversations on a variety of topics that range from LGBTQ issues, poverty issues, seniors' issues and housing issues.

Jacqueline is also passionately committed to making a difference in the lives of women and girls. She is a strong community activist with regard to seniors' issues, cultural diversity and inclusion, and food security.

These are just a couple of outstanding volunteers who do work in London. I wish I could highlight all the work of the wonderful, dedicated volunteers, but there just isn't enough time.

I encourage all members of this Legislature to take the time on this International Volunteer Day to say thank you to the people who do great work in their ridings.

PETITIONS

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mrs. Julia Munro: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians need and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

As I am in agreement, I have signed it and given it to page Ajay.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinais: I have this petition signed by Mrs. Maureen Spec from Lively in my riding. It reads as follows:

"Whereas Ontario's growing and aging population is putting an increasing strain on our publicly funded health care system; and

"Whereas since February 2015, the Ontario government has made an almost 7% unilateral cut to physician services expenditures which cover all the care doctors provide to patients; and

"Whereas the decisions Ontario makes today will impact patients' access to quality care in the years to come and these cuts will threaten access to the quality, patient-focused care Ontarians" deserve "and expect;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: Return to the table with Ontario's doctors and work together through mediation-arbitration to reach a fair deal that protects the quality, patient-focused care Ontario's families deserve."

I support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Aislin to bring it to the Clerk.

WATER FLUORIDATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly entitled "Fluoridate All Ontario Drinking Water." From this petition I would

especially like to thank Dr. J.E. Clement and Dr. John Lafferty from London, Ontario.

It reads as follows:

“Whereas fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in virtually all water supplies, even the ocean; and

“Whereas scientific studies conducted during the past 70 years have consistently shown that the fluoridation of community water supplies is a safe and effective means of preventing dental decay, and is a public health measure endorsed by more than 90 national and international health organizations; and

“Whereas dental decay is the second most frequent condition suffered by children, and is one of the leading causes of absences from school; and

“Whereas Health Canada has determined that the optimal concentration of fluoride in municipal drinking water for dental health is 0.7 mg/L, a concentration providing optimal dental health benefits, and well below the maximum acceptable concentration to protect against adverse health effects; and

“Whereas the decision to add fluoride to municipal drinking water is a patchwork of individual choices across Ontario, with municipal councils often vulnerable to the influence of misinformation, and studies of questionable or no scientific merit;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the ministries of the government of Ontario amend all applicable legislation and regulations to make the fluoridation of municipal drinking water mandatory in all municipal water systems across the province of Ontario.”

I'm pleased to sign and to support this petition and to send it down with page Aaran.

1350

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms. Laurie Scott: “Stop the Sale of Hydro One.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the decision to sell Hydro One has been made without public input and the sale will be conducted in complete secrecy; and

“Whereas if the people of Ontario lose majority ownership in Hydro One, ratepayers will be forced to accept whatever changes the new owners decide, including higher rates; and

“Whereas Ontario's Financial Accountability Officer has warned the sale of Hydro One would be detrimental to Ontario's financial situation; and

“Whereas the Liberal government has removed independent oversight of Hydro One, including the Auditor General and the Ombudsman.

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario immediately stop the sale of Hydro One.”

It's signed by hundreds of people from my riding. I'll hand it to page Lauren.

PRIVATISATION DES BIENS PUBLICS

M. Michael Mantha: J'ai une pétition à présenter.

« Hydro One, pas à vendre!

« Pétition à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que le gouvernement provincial conçoit un projet de privatisation qui entraînera une hausse des tarifs d'électricité, une baisse de la fiabilité et des centaines de millions de dollars en moins pour nos écoles, nos routes et nos hôpitaux; et

« Attendu que le projet de privatisation sera particulièrement préjudiciable pour les communautés du Nord et des Premières Nations; et

« Attendu que le gouvernement provincial conçoit ce projet de privatisation dans le secret, faisant que les Ontariens n'ont pas un mot à dire sur un changement qui affectera sérieusement leur vie; et

« Attendu qu'il n'est pas trop tard pour annuler le projet;

« Compte tenu de cela, nous, les soussignés, pétitionnons l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario comme suit :

« Que la province de l'Ontario annule immédiatement son projet de privatisation du réseau de distribution d'électricité de l'Ontario. »

Je suis complètement d'accord avec cette pétition. Je la présente au page Aaran pour l'apporter à la table des greffiers.

GO TRANSIT

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Cambridge, Ontario, is a municipality of over 125,000 people, many of whom commute into the greater Toronto area daily;

“Whereas the current commuting options available for travel between the Waterloo region and the GTA are inefficient and time-consuming, as well as environmentally damaging;

“Whereas the residents of Cambridge and the Waterloo region believe that they would be well-served by commuter rail transit that connects the region to the Milton line, and that this infrastructure would have positive, tangible economic benefits to the province of Ontario;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Direct crown agency Metrolinx to commission a feasibility study into building a rail line that connects the city of Cambridge to the GO train station in Milton, and to complete this study in a timely manner and communicate the results to the municipal government of Cambridge.”

I agree with the petition, and I affix my name and give it to Megan Faith to bring down.

LUNG HEALTH

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, *Your Lungs, Your Life*, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

It's signed by a significant number of constituents, and I support this petition as well.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I have a petition that originated with Dr. Anh Thi Tran in Concord, Ontario.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"(1) Reverse the cuts to health care;

"(2) Return to the bargaining table with the OMA (Ontario Medical Association) to resume negotiations for a fair physician services agreement;

"(3) Work with all front-line health care provider groups to develop plans to create a sustainable health care system for the people of Ontario."

I agree with this petition, will sign my name to it and give it to Ben to take up to the front.

LUNG HEALTH

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas lung disease affects more than" 2.5 "million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children;

"Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

"In the Ontario Lung Association report, *Your Lungs, Your Life*, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To allow for deputations on" my colleague "MPP Kathryn McGarry's private member's bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

"Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage."

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and give it to page Noam.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I have a petition here to lower hydro rates.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Whereas the billion-dollar gas plants cancellation, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020; and

"Whereas the Liberal government wasted \$2 billion on the flawed smart meter program; and

"Whereas the recent announcement to implement the Ontario Electricity Support Program will see average household hydro bills increase an additional \$137 per year starting in 2016; and

"Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

"Whereas home heating and electricity are a necessity for families in Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity."

I agree with this petition and send it down with page Hannah.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition brought to me by some of the good people in Kirkland Lake.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the provincial government has cancelled the Northlander passenger train which served the residents of northeastern Ontario; and

“Whereas the provincial government has closed bus stations and is cancelling bus routes despite promising enhanced bus services to replace the train; and

“Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) has been given a mandate that its motor coach division must be self-sustaining; and

“Whereas Metrolinx, the crown corporation that provides train and bus service in the GTA ... is subsidized by more than \$100 million annually; and

“Whereas the subsidy to Metrolinx has increased annually for the last seven years;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To direct the Minister of Northern Development and Mines to reverse the decision to cancel bus routes immediately and to treat northerners equitably in decisions regarding public transportation.”

I wholeheartedly agree and will give my petition to Megan Faith to bring to the table.

1400

LUNG HEALTH

Ms. Daiene Vernile: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas lung disease affects more than 2.4 million people in the province of Ontario, more than 570,000 of whom are children and youth living with asthma;

“Of the four chronic diseases responsible for 79% of deaths (cancers, cardiovascular diseases, lung disease and diabetes) lung disease is the only one without a dedicated province-wide strategy;

“In the Ontario Lung Association report, Your Lungs, Your Life, it is estimated that lung disease currently costs the Ontario taxpayers more than \$4 billion a year in direct and indirect health care costs, and that this figure is estimated to rise to more than \$80 billion seven short years from now;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To allow for deputations on MPP Kathryn McGarry’s private member’s bill, Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, which establishes a Lung Health Advisory Council to make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues and requires the minister to develop and implement an Ontario Lung

Health Action Plan with respect to research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease; and

“Once debated at committee, to expedite Bill 41, Lung Health Act, 2014, through the committee stage and back to the Legislature for third and final reading; and to immediately call for a vote on Bill 41 and to seek royal assent immediately upon its passage.”

I agree with this, will affix my signature and hand it to page Aaran.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (CONTRAVENTIONS CAUSING DEATH OR SERIOUS BODILY HARM), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (CONTRAVENTIONS AYANT CAUSÉ UN DÉCÈS OU DES BLESSURES CORPORELLES GRAVES)

Mr. Gates moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 154, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to create an offence of contravention causing death or serious bodily harm / Projet de loi 154, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour ériger en infraction le fait d’avoir causé un décès ou des blessures corporelles graves pendant la commission d’une contravention.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation. The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to rise and speak today. I speak as the New Democratic Party critic for transportation, but also as someone who continues to do everything he can to fight for safety on our roads to ensure that our families stay safe. I’m committed to ensuring that the roads in this province are safe and that regulations are fair across the board.

What I’m proposing today with this bill is relatively simple. I believe there is an oversight in the Highway Traffic Act; a gap, if you will. I don’t think it’s there on purpose, but it has big consequences.

Right now in the province, if a driver commits an unsafe act or turn, they are exposed to a penalty of \$500. I think that if all they’re doing is turning unsafely, then perhaps that penalty fits the crime. Making an unsafe turn is always dangerous, but a ticket and a police officer educating the driver about the dangers is a penalty that fits.

The problem comes when the driver committing an unsafe turn does cause a death or serious bodily harm. I’d like to recognize two guys here today: Gerry Rhodes—stand up—who drove eight hours to be here today for the presentation; and Brian Bennett, the vice-chair.

Interjection: Burnett.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Burnett; sorry.

Though this problem affects anyone who drives in this province, the issue was originally brought to my attention by the Bikers Rights Organization of Canada. I had the pleasure of speaking at their conference last year, when they came to Niagara Falls, and I was frankly shocked when they presented the evidence to me. My colleague the MPP from Algoma-Manitoulin, Mike Mantha, was our transportation critic at the time. He has done some great work on this issue. I'm glad that I was able to go to the conference on his behalf because this is where this important issue was raised to me.

Bill 154, before this House today, is a very important piece of legislation. Between 1993 and 2012, nearly 300 motorcycle riders were killed in accidents through no fault of their own. In fact, during those years, up to 43% of the accidents that involved people riding motorcycles were caused through no fault of the motorcycle rider.

You need to look no further than July 2002, the case of David and Wanda Harrison, to understand how this issue impacts the people of Ontario. The Harrisons were both bikers who enjoyed riding their motorcycle as a hobby. They were a family who spent quality time together. They spent it out on the open roads, enjoying all the beauty of our great province, what it has to offer. Perhaps, most importantly, they spent their time together, doing something they both loved to do.

In my riding in Niagara Falls, we have some of the most beautiful scenery you can find in Canada, not to mention all the wineries, craft brewers, ciders and—one of my favourites—horse racing in Fort Erie. Motorcyclists and cyclists drive and ride along the Niagara Parkway all summer and just take in the feeling of the open air and the truly incredible landscape. These are just ordinary folks, like the members here in the House, some of them older, some of them younger—probably more are getting older—but they all enjoy riding motorcycles and the feeling that it brings them.

Well, the Harrisons were the kind of people who did that. In July 2002, they rode on a ride when everything changed. On Highway 17, a vehicle made an unsafe turn between three motorcycles. In the resulting collision, both David and Wanda Harrison lost their lives. They weren't doing anything wrong, other than enjoying their hobby and their time together, but one split-second decision, a driver making a turn without taking proper safety precautions, and it changed everything.

I think most of us would be shocked to learn the current penalty that exists for this sort of issue under the Highway Traffic Act. We'd be shocked because, if there's an accident that causes serious injury or death, we assume the penalty would be harsh enough that it fits the crime. However, that's not the case. Under the Highway Traffic Act there is no difference when someone is injured as a result of an illegal turn or not. So what is the penalty for the driver who turned and caused the death of the Harrisons? It's not any sort of jail time; it's not even the loss of a licence. Under the Highway Traffic Act, this

sort of infraction—even if it causes the loss of a life—carries a maximum penalty of \$500.

I'd like to explain to you why this happens. Under the Highway Traffic Act, when there is no penalty set out for a violation of the act, a penalty is decided based on section 214. Section 214 is the general penalty section of the act and is used in cases like this. Unfortunately, that section does not allow for penalties to be increased on the basis of the death or serious harm that was caused.

What this bill will do is add a section to the HTA that ensures any driver who causes or contributes to causing death or serious injury while violating the act is subject to harsher penalties than if they hadn't caused a death or serious injury. The penalty needs to fit the crime. That is a fundamental part of our justice system.

1410

I'm not here trying to convince this government to dramatically increase penalties across the board. I believe that, for the most part, the Highway Traffic Act is a good piece of legislation that helps keep our roads safe. I'm not asking for unreasonable measures to be added to the Highway Traffic Act. All you need to do is compare some infractions and consequences and you will see that section 214 of the Highway Traffic Act is severely lacking.

For example, if you are stopped by a RIDE program and deemed to be over the legal limit, you automatically lose your licence for 60 days. You lose your licence for 60 days because you had too much to drink and you put other peoples' lives at risk. I think that all of us in the House understand that concept. When you put other people and their families and loved ones at risk, you have to pay a penalty.

Compare that to the case I mentioned, where someone making an unsafe turn not only puts somebody else's life at risk but actually seriously harms them or, in this particular case that I'm describing, kills both of them. The penalties don't match up at all.

If someone comes to Niagara Falls and makes an unsafe turn and hits the car of someone who is carrying their children, the maximum penalty under the Highway Traffic Act is \$500. That needs to change, and we can do that.

We need to do more to ensure that any individual who causes or contributes to causing death or serious injury while violating the Highway Traffic Act is subject to more severe penalties than are currently in place.

Mr. Speaker, don't mistake my intention here. My intention is not to demand stricter penalties to punish those who make unsafe turns. I don't truly believe people make these turns on purpose. I think that most people do their best to make sure they're paying attention to the road and trying to keep themselves and others safe. Unfortunately, sometimes we make mistakes.

We made major changes to the Highway Traffic Act in the last session to protect drivers on the road when it came to the issue of texting and driving. Bill 31 increased fines for distracted drivers and increased fines for

collisions involving cyclists. This amendment that I'm putting forward today was proposed at the time as well.

That was very important work. As the father of three daughters—Jacqueline, Chantal and Tara—I know the importance of making sure that we eliminate distracted driving. When my youngest daughter, Jacqueline, was learning to drive, we always stressed the importance of giving your undivided attention to the road.

We know it happens out there and we knew we had to do something about it. As legislators, it is our responsibility to make sure that our constituents and families are safe on our roads. That means trying to fight back against distracted driving and it means having stiffer penalties for any individual who causes or contributes to causing death or serious injury while violating the Highway Traffic Act than the ones currently in place.

How do we do that? How do we go about making sure that all Ontarians understand the danger of distracted drivers? We engaged in education campaigns to tell Ontarians, especially our young people, that texting and driving puts you at serious risk. In fact, it is the most dangerous thing happening on our roads today, which is why it was so important for us to pass Bill 31. Now we need to continue working, as figures in our communities, to tell people the dangers of distracted driving.

In addition to that, we also increased the fines and penalties for anyone who is caught violating the distracted driving rules in the Highway Traffic Act. We dramatically increased the penalties for distracted driving. We added demerit points and increased the financial penalties. We did this because it would act as a deterrent to those who were going to drive and text at the same time.

When we increase these penalties, people know how serious they are and have a better understanding of what the consequences will be of violating the act. It also ensures there's a proper penalty for those who get caught ignoring those laws or driving unsafely. The penalty needs to fit the crime. It's no different than what I'm proposing here for this amendment to the Highway Traffic Act.

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: That's all I've got left?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Thirty seconds, buddy.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Wow, that went quick. Sorry about that. Okay, I'll wrap up here.

Mr. Speaker, by adding this proposed section to the Highway Traffic Act, we help ensure that motorcyclists are safe on the roads. We help ensure that anyone who strikes a motorcycle or a bicycle or a pedestrian, causing death or serious injury, is subject to penalties that fit the crime. Passing this bill will help bring justice for the families who have lost loved ones, families like the Harrisons and the Mayhews, who knew all too well the pain following a motorcycle accident.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It's always a pleasure to rise in the House on behalf of my constituents in Burlington,

and on this particular occasion to speak to Bill 154, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

I'd like to thank the member from Niagara Falls, who spoke with great eloquence and passion. I want to honour his guests, who travelled such a long way to be here today to join us for this conversation. I know, from having talked to the member, that he shares my passion for road safety, a passion and commitment that is indeed resonant with so many members of this House.

The good news is—of course, there is a lot of room for improvement, and I'll get to that in a moment—that important contextually is that for the last 13 years Ontario has been ranked either first or second in North America for road safety, a statistic for which our government is very proud. We have among the safest roads in North America. Having said that, the unfortunate reality is that too many people in Ontario fall victim to collisions that cause serious bodily harm or death, as the member opposite mentioned.

Sometimes this can be the result of poor and reckless judgment, such as impaired or careless driving. Other times it can be caused by an unfortunate human error and bad choices. Either way, individuals and families are left to deal with the damage done and lives lost. When these tragedies are caused by the bad choices made by somebody else, there can be an unfortunate and overwhelming sense of frustration, anger and helplessness.

I know this all too well, Mr. Speaker. As members of this place will know, I lost my husband, OPP Sergeant Greg Stobbart, on June 6, 2006, as a result of the poor choices and recklessness of a man who, at the time, had five convictions for driving while under suspension, four convictions for driving with no insurance and \$15,000 in unpaid fines. Two months later, he was involved in another at-fault collision, all of this while driving commercially.

His poor choice—to pass my husband out on a training ride on his bicycle while he was travelling on a two-lane road going uphill—cost Greg his life. While this loss was overwhelming for all of us, it led us to fight for steeper penalties in Ontario, just as the member is doing today; in this case, for repeat offenders, people who drive habitually and repeatedly under suspension.

Greg's Law was passed in 2009, a proud legacy in response to my husband—

Applause.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you—who had dedicated his life and his career to keeping roads and communities safe right across our province for 25 years. It's worthy of note that Greg had many friends who owned and drove motorcycles, as the member referenced today. Sadly, he investigated a number of fatal motorcycle collisions, so he knew that only too well.

As this kind of advocacy demonstrates, anything that we as legislators can do, including the type of conversation we're having today, is important when it comes to discussing road safety and making our roads safer right across Ontario. Keeping our roads safe is the highest priority for our government, which is why we continue to

focus on improving road safety through a combination of initiatives that include legislation, public education, supporting the enforcement efforts of Ontario police officers and partnerships with road safety partners like CAA and Arrive Alive Drive Sober.

That is why we are proud of the all-party support—the member opposite mentioned this a few moments ago—that was received by Bill 31, which passed in June of this year. I had the privilege of working on this bill with partners at MTO for a number of years, prior to being elected. As was noted, it was a tremendous step forward in road safety. In fact, it was the most significant update of the Highway Traffic Act, when it comes to cycling, in the history of our province. As CEO of the Share the Road Cycling Coalition, I sat on the 2012 coroner's review into cycling deaths in Ontario, and many of the recommendations in the review were included in Bill 31.

As much as education and awareness are important, however, we need to ensure that those who are responsible for collisions receive the penalties and sentences they deserve, because this, in and of itself, can be a deterrent. Bill 154 proposes to amend the Highway Traffic Act such that if bodily harm or death is caused as a result of a collision that happens during a contravention of the act or its regulations, the driver will face a fine of up to \$5,000 or imprisonment for a term of up to 12 months, or both.

Creating these types of offences and penalty provisions in the HTA, or Highway Traffic Act, as laid out in the bill could encourage reliance upon charges and convictions for lesser provincial offences, which could actually result in fewer convictions under the Criminal Code of Canada. I know that's not the member's intent. It's perhaps an unintended consequence, but this kind of federal legislation—as the Criminal Code is—is typically where serious charges are laid. I'm hoping that in working with the member opposite, whose intentions are sincere, together we can find mechanisms for changing and strengthening the Highway Traffic Act.

1420

The other serious charges that are covered under the Criminal Code, of course, include things like impaired driving and distracted driving, which the member mentioned, and they involve mens rea, or intent, and that is why they are so serious. Criminal driving misconduct deserves a truly criminal charge and conviction. Of course, provincial offences are lesser offences, and that is why they are not covered under the Criminal Code.

In addition, many Highway Traffic Act offences of the type that might be expected to result in serious bodily harm or death, such as street racing, aggressive driving, careless driving, failure to remain at the scene of a collision or failing to stop for emergency vehicles—these kinds of things do have significant penalty provisions and other licence sanctions that fully reflect the seriousness of the misconduct.

So while I support the member's call for strengthening the act, I think this bill—and this conversation, which

I'm so pleased that he started—deserves a little bit of tweaking and some work.

To go back to the Criminal Code for a minute, the penalties if death is involved are extremely serious. A conviction for criminal negligence causing death, for example, carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

While this bill has a few technical challenges, I will ultimately be supporting it, and again, I thank my colleague from Niagara Falls for tabling it. I know that he, like all of us in this House, wants to make sure that all road users in Ontario are safe.

I look forward to the ongoing debate, today and into the future, on this important issue and to working with the member from Niagara Falls on road safety—an issue, certainly, of common interest and concern.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm pleased to rise and speak on Bill 154, the Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Contraventions Causing Death or Serious Bodily Harm). I have to admit that I'd prefer to talk about something a bit more lighthearted.

The member opposite lost her husband in a cycling road accident, and it's sad. But it's also heartwarming when people are able to share difficult stories and we can all learn from that. I think that really has to be the focus: how we can better educate the public to be more cautious.

I'm driving around right now with a bumper sticker, a magnetic thing, that's from the region of York. They made it up. It says, "Cyclists and motorists share the road"—actually, I don't look at it very often, but it's something to that effect. You can go look at my spot and see exactly what it says. It reminds me, whenever I do look at it, to watch out for the cyclists and the motorcycles on our roads.

Before I came down to work at the Legislature, I was hosting on Rogers cable in York region, and one of the shows was on motorcycles, basically. We had a police officer who is a motorcycle cop—if you're still allowed to say "motorcycle cop"—a motorcycle officer. One of the things that surprised me is, I asked him how old a child has to be in order to ride on the back of a motorcycle on our roads, and he said, "There's no age limit. It's a height limit." I asked, "Oh, am I tall enough to ride on the back of a motorcycle?" I'm joking. I'm not that tall, as we know. How tall does a child have to be in order to ride? I thought maybe it's to ride one of the loop-the-loop roller coasters at Wonderland, that that's how tall a child would have to be to be on the back of a motorcycle. If we would allow them on that kind of a roller coaster, maybe we'd allow them—to be fairly safe. We all know that motorcycles can be a little risky sometimes. But they can ride on the back. The police officer said, "No, it isn't a certain height restriction. They just have to touch the pedals with their feet. A lot of people have those pedals moved up so that they can fit very young children on the backs of motorcycles." Well,

I find that very disturbing, because I don't know that young children really understand the precarious nature of being on the back of a motorcycle, just trying to hold on. They're not even that strong.

That gets me thinking a little bit about how we have to all be aware and do our part. Life is full of calculated risks. I'm not going to say people shouldn't be on the road with bicycles; I'm on the road with a bicycle often enough. People should be encouraged to exercise, to be on bicycles, on motorcycles, if that's what they choose. But I think it's up to the rest of us, who really—as I said to my kids when they started driving, “You're driving a tank.” You are driving a piece of metal. You touch the pedal and it moves very quickly. You feel like you're flying, and you think that it's all very carefree. But actually, there are pedestrians out there, there are cyclists and, yes, there are motorcyclists out there, and we have to all be thinking of that.

We heard from the member opposite that there are difficulties between the traffic act, and penalties, versus charges under the Criminal Code, which require a certain level of intent. I have to agree with her that intent sometimes plays into things, and oftentimes it's a struggle between the spirit of the law and the letter of the law.

We have heard of cases in the newspapers where somebody has been injured. In the States, when Brady was shot, he survived for perhaps 20, 25 years. But when he died, they went back and recharged his assailant with murder, 25 years after he was shot. The fact isn't that they could have killed you; the fact is whether or not they did kill you. I always have a problem with that, because I always think that if somebody aimed a gun at me, whether or not they hit me shouldn't matter so much. It should be that their intention was to hurt me or possibly kill me.

I think this is what it comes down to, oftentimes, with highway safety: that, too often, people are very focused on, “somebody died, and somebody should be penalized.” Of course, it shouldn't be just about a penalty—and \$500 is ridiculous. It should be about, “Is that person understanding the consequences of their actions?”

Maybe there's a further course; maybe there's education. Maybe there's something more we can do in the Legislature to warn people. Yes, nobody has the intent to make a wrong left turn and hit a motorcycle and kill somebody—nobody has that intent; I really don't believe they do—but to be focused on what you're doing and how dangerous it is, and how complicated our world has become in terms of road safety.

Yes, our roads, the government tells us, are supposedly ranked high in road safety, but perhaps that's because of our gridlock, because nobody's able to go at a speed where they're going to cause those severe accidents.

We all saw an increase in severe accidents during the Pan Am Games with the HOV lanes. My guess would be it was because you had people going the speed limit in the HOV lanes, with other people in complete gridlock. When you have people merging from absolute gridlock

into those very fast-moving HOV lanes or the other way around, that is a recipe for disaster. It's the same problem with cars and motorcycles: The difference in speed and power, and the danger of exposure, is phenomenal. Too often, I think, we lose sight of that.

I look forward to this bill making it to committee. I think that there's a lot we can do. I myself have a private member's bill, Bill 30, the Highway Incident Management Act. We need more oversight of our highways. I would like to invite the member from Niagara, who presented this private member's bill, to come and speak to the fact that we need to have a specific task force. We had it before and dismantled it after an election a number of years ago. We need to look at our highways, not just motorcycles. We need to look at what we can do to make our highways safer.

Yes, my private member's bill is more focused on clearing accidents quickly off the highways. I brought letters of support from CAA; IBC, the Insurance Bureau of Canada; other insurance companies; and the provincial towing association, all in support.

I think part of that is the fact that if you have an accident on the highway and it doesn't get cleared quickly, it causes further accidents. We see time and time again that there's a car—it might not even have been in an accident, but perhaps it's a truck that dropped something. We heard of a horrific one yesterday—I don't know if they found it yet—where a metal rod six feet long went through a car windshield.

There are a lot of issues on our roads in terms of people carrying things for resale, or it's just construction equipment. It's not tied down properly and sometimes a windshield gets cracked, and that's an annoyance. But too often we see people getting injured.

1430

What can we do in the Legislature to address this? Well, we can move forward with a private member's bill such as the member put forward so that it can get to committee, so that we can hear from the stakeholders and so that we can move forward.

I look forward to working with him, both on my private member's bill and his private member's bill. Perhaps there's something we can work out together.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm always proud to stand in this Legislature on behalf of my residents in London-Fanshawe. I stand today to speak to the bill from my colleague from Niagara Falls, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to create an offence of contravention causing death or serious bodily harm.

I'd like to thank my colleague from Niagara Falls for introducing this piece of legislation. The member has been a strong advocate for the residents of his riding and has been quite active in his critic portfolio of transportation, so I would like to take a minute to thank him for his contributions to this Legislature.

This bill proposes changes to the Highway Traffic Act and is a step in the right direction. Essentially, the bill

amends the Highway Traffic Act to enshrine increased penalties for anyone who causes death or serious injury to another person while violating the act. Bill 154's proposed new penalties include fines of up to \$5,000, a licence suspension of up to a year, plus time spent in prison, if applicable, or a jail term of up to a year.

Currently in Ontario, someone who violates the Highway Traffic Act and causes an accident that results in death or serious injury could be subject to a \$500 fine. The families and loved ones of those killed in accidents are looking for, I guess, a fairness piece.

Residents of my riding have contacted my office on this very issue, asking for stronger penalties for those who kill motorcyclists. A couple of years ago, I received this email from a resident of London-Fanshawe. I'll quote him:

"I am an avid motorcycle enthusiast, so what I am about to bring into light and would like guidance in concerns all riders.

"As you have probably noticed, this month has been a bad month for motorcyclists. I believe six deaths this month alone. As much as it saddens me, it also infuriates me.

"The last two deaths and most recent both concerned experienced drivers with families and their life was ended due to impatience and negligence on the part of automobile and truck drivers.

"The part that bothers me most is the drivers involved in 'killing' these motorcyclists were given nothing more than a slap on the wrist. A minor traffic fine and two points off their licence.

"I am appalled at the total disregard for the motorcycle rider on the part of the courts and the judicial system." That's the end of the quote.

This message is one that I think all members of the Legislature have heard in the past. People feel that the penalties aren't equal to what happens when a motorcyclist is killed in an accident.

When I received this email from my constituent, we did some research on it. In fact, in recent years, the Ontario Safety League has campaigned to amend the Highway Traffic Act to increase sentences where careless driving results in injury or death. According to the league official, Ministry of Transportation officials have been receptive to the proposal. To date, however, no such bill has been put forward to the Legislature. That is why I commend the member from Niagara Falls for introducing this legislation today for second reading.

Other organizations like the Bikers Rights Organization have called for this type of legislation to be introduced, as has been done in other states south of the border, such as Iowa, New York and Maryland.

But residents of London-Fanshawe have been feeling this much closer to home. Just a few months ago, there was a tragic accident involving two motorcyclists in London. I'd like to read a quote from the London Free Press about the vigil held in memory of these two individuals.

"As dusk fell along Wellington Road, just outside St. Thomas, candles flickered on the ground beside a shrine of photos and flowers.

"Cars lined the busy road and more than 100 people made the solemn walk along the shoulder to the Ferguson Line corner.

"Tears flowed. There was a sad, still silence while they remembered two young lives from London's east end."

Speaker, this was a tragic event in my riding, and I imagine that there are stories just like this one all over the province. In fact, between 1993 and 2011, 275 motorcyclists were killed in accidents that were no fault of their own, and between 1993 and 2012 up to 43% of the accidents involving motorcycles were through no fault of the motorcycle rider.

Again, I would like to thank the member from Niagara Falls for bringing this legislation forward. I think the fact that we're bringing it forward for education and awareness—what we need to do is talk about these things and educate the public about their responsibility on the road to be vigilant and watch out for pedestrians and motorcyclists.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: It's always a pleasure to rise on behalf of my constituents in Cambridge and North Dumfries. I wanted to say hello to those watching at home today about this very important debate.

I wanted to start off by thanking the member from Niagara Falls for bringing this legislation, his private member's bill, forward today to potentially change legislation.

I know, in speaking with the member, that road safety is the core issue of why he wanted to bring this bill forward. I commend anybody thinking about road safety for doing that. As you know, Speaker, our government is really proud of our record being the first- or second-safest jurisdiction in North America for our roads. But we also know that there is more that can be done to improve road safety. That is why our government continues to focus on improving road safety through a combination of initiatives that includes legislation, public education and supporting the enforcement efforts of Ontario's police services.

Most recently, we were very proud to see Bill 31, the Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act, pass in June of this year with all-party support. I was very proud of that. But I also do know that the road safety issues that this legislation addresses continue to be persistent challenges in Ontario. I wanted to mention in the House that, two kilometres away from my house, a friend of my son was recently killed, so this strikes very close to home.

I also wanted to mention that I have had a lot of experience in the emergency departments, the intensive care units and also as a home care nurse. A great many of my patients were there because of road safety issues. Either they were cyclists, pedestrians or drivers that experienced a motor vehicle crash, so I know the signifi-

cant toll that it takes, not only for the patients but their families and surrounding communities when it comes to road safety issues.

According to recent statistics, over 45% of drivers killed in Ontario were found to have drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol in their system. Drinking and driving fatalities represented nearly one quarter of all fatalities on our roads in 2011. From 2008 to 2012, an average of 14% of convicted alcohol-impaired drivers were repeat offenders. This has to stop.

If current collision trends continue, fatalities from distracted driving may exceed those from drinking and driving by 2016. This is completely unacceptable.

In 2011, pedestrians constituted approximately one in five motor vehicle-related fatalities.

Bill 31 addressed some of these concerns by increasing penalties in the areas of impaired driving, distracted driving and cyclist safety:

- distracted driving fines, from a fine range of \$60 to \$500, increased to \$300 to \$1,000, upon conviction;

- driver's licence suspensions for those found to be driving under the influence of drugs or a combination of drugs and alcohol; and also

- requiring drivers to keep a one-metre distance from cyclists when passing to keep them safe.

I'm also very happy that we have extended the "slow down, move over" law to include tow trucks with flashing amber lights because they have also been at risk when they are helping to rescue these motorists.

I wanted to point out, on Bill 154, that there are a number of substantive policy issues with this bill that need to be addressed. I know that there's an absolute significant legal difference between an offence classified as an absolute liability offence, for which there is no defence, and an offence classified as a strict liability offence, for which there may be an defence.

1440

As we all know, and as the member for Burlington pointed out already, very serious charges can already be laid under the Criminal Code as it pertains to driving offences. These charges can include dangerous driving, dangerous driving causing bodily harm, dangerous driving causing death, criminal negligence causing bodily harm or criminal negligence causing death. In the case of Bill 154, a Highway Traffic Act charge would therefore be perceived to be inadequate in circumstances where a death has occurred.

Under the Criminal Code, the penalties if death is involved are extremely serious. A conviction for criminal negligence causing death, for instance, is punishable with imprisonment for life.

As I said earlier, I appreciate the member bringing forward his concerns about road safety, and I, for one, would really like to see this bill brought forward into committee, and we can have a more fulsome discussion. I just really want to give him a shout-out today for trying to improve our road safety, as do we on the government side.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you to the member from Niagara Falls for bringing this Highway Traffic Amendment Act forward today so that we can discuss the best routes, moving forward, to ensure that our legislated penalties reflect the realities of impacts resulting from the offence committed; in other words, to make the penalty fit the crime.

While we understand the principles behind this bill to do just that, I would be remiss if I didn't mention that there is a series of further concerns that the lack of detail considering the overall impact of this act would have.

I do know that since the bill had notice waived and was introduced on Tuesday, obviously a number of stakeholders—the Ontario police association, the Ontario Bar Association, the CAA etc.—did express some surprise. It's my hope that the consultation that may not have been able to be accomplished ahead of today's debate will be able to be done in earnest if this bill is successful in passing second reading later this afternoon.

I say, Speaker, that while we do have some concerns as to the wide brush that is used to paint the framework for these enhanced penalties, as I noted earlier, some of the principles supporting the direction the member is heading with this are not without merit.

Specifically, we can find merit in the need for enhanced penalty structures when it comes to the penalties faced by those who cause fatal injuries that are directly linked to their lack of adherence to Highway Traffic Act rules. I think of the work done by our friends on two wheels, motorcyclists and cyclists alike, who understandably have been looking for more than the current slap on the wrist when it comes to motorists who break laws and cause the deaths of their fellow, two-wheeled, commuters.

The Bikers Rights Organization of Ontario, for instance, has instituted a petition with a preamble that helps to paint a pretty clear picture of the need for a strengthened system of penalties. They draw the comparison of the very important and well-supported penalties faced by an impaired driver—penalties we worked with government to support in Bill 31 less than a year ago—with the driver who causes the death of motorcyclists. The petition's preamble notes:

"A driver stopped at a RIDE program and found to be over the limit loses their licence for an immediate 60 days, without a trial or conviction, and then upon a conviction loses their licence for a further year, pays a minimum of a \$500 fine and after reinstatement of licence must pay to have a Breathalyzer device installed and maintained in their vehicle for a further year.

"Compare those penalties to a driver who makes an unsafe turn in front of a motorcycle and kills both riders. That driver will receive a \$500 fine only.

"The first person pays a comparatively large penalty because they have the potential to do harm, but a person who actually kills cannot receive anything more substantial than a \$500 fine."

The petition site goes on to relate the tragic story of David and Wanda Harrison, who were killed in a collision with a vehicle that had turned left in between three motorcycles on Highway 17. They report that the driver of the car was convicted of an unsafe turn and received the maximum penalty allowed under the Highway Traffic Act; that is, a \$500 fine.

With all that, Speaker, while we support enhanced safety measures on Ontario roads and can understand the principles for strengthened penalties to meet the impact of HTA contraventions, I feel that as it is currently written, this proposal seems to use too broad a brush to address poor driving behaviours that are already penalized under the Highway Traffic Act. I look forward to further debate perhaps in committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to rise in this House—and today to support the bill from my colleague from Niagara Falls regarding increased fines for accidents that cause serious injury or death.

Before I start my comments, I would like to commend the member for Burlington, who brought forward a personal story, a very tragic story. That is actually the strength of this House, that we all have life experiences and we all bring those experiences forward. I'd really like to congratulate all members, but especially the member for Burlington, for enriching the debate of this bill today.

Now, I'm going to put a shameless plug in for my own riding, because in my riding we have the New Liskeard Bikers Reunion. On average, it's on the first July weekend, and there are 25,000 people who come to watch. We get about 6,000 bikers who come. One of the most touching moments of that is the Freedom Ride. We have miles and miles of bikers who first go to the hospital. We stop and they give gifts to cancer patients, and then we do a long ride over a lot of roads. This is all done to raise money for cancer. Since it started in 1999, it has raised \$1 million for cancer research.

Why I bring it up, besides the shameless plug, is that when you see those motorbike riders, there are a lot of families and a lot of retired people. So for people who think—there are still some people who think, “Those irresponsible bikers are going way too fast,” and I've always wanted to be able to say this in the House: “They've got these crotch rockets.” There are a few of those, but most bikers are trying to live within the rules of the road and are a benefit to society. I know I have some fellow bikers here in the House. The member from Beaches–East York; I've commented on his bike. He has a pretty unique bike.

One thing about the Bikers Reunion is they give away a Harley every year. You can buy tickets. Since I'm a Triumph rider, I'm not really a big Harley fan, but I can live with it.

But the one thing—I think it's for pedestrians, it's for bicycles, and perhaps bikers have a better sense of it: There are a lot of risks on the road that you don't notice

until you're on a bike. Because if somebody does something wrong in a car, you get maybe a fender-bender or something more serious, but there aren't too many fender-benders on a motorbike. I notice it. I'm a weekend rider. I do a bit of constituency work in my riding on a motorbike, and you have to watch out all the time. I've had people stop at stop signs and then pull out right in front of you. On a bike, you don't have much time. If those people knew—because it's going to keep happening—that the fine, if you actually hurt someone, is pretty serious, perhaps it would be a deterrent.

We're not saying that this bill is perfect. That's why we're bringing it forward. The way this should work is we bring this bill forward; hopefully, it gets passed today and hopefully we can all agree and the government agrees to bring it forward to committee where we can have fulsome debate with all the stakeholders and see how we can make the roads safer for everyone.

Why it's a little bit focused on motorbikes is because you, at least from my point of view, see the risks much more. When I walk to work, when I'm down here—when you're a pedestrian, too, you always have to watch out, but stuff goes slower. You have a bit more chance to react. On a motorbike, somebody makes a left in front of you or somebody—one of my cousins, who's a pretty shy guy, so I won't name him, was in London and he was on a Norton and somebody stopped at a red light, looked at him and pulled out right in front of him. He has been in years of therapy to get that solved. Basically, they had eye contact and still the guy went out. Those are the issues that we're trying to deal with in this bill.

1450

So I fully support this bill and I think it has to go forward. It has to go to committee where we can have a fulsome discussion about how to make our roads safer.

I'm going to go back, because I still have a minute, to talk about things like the Bikers Reunion. Bikers have evolved—they do great things for our community—and the laws also have to evolve to represent how that sport has changed.

There have always been families who were into biking; it's a pretty big family occupation. On weekends, when I go riding around I see a lot of families who do this as a family occupation or family recreation; and they should be secure in the knowledge that the laws reflect what they enjoy doing.

On that note, I'd like to end my comments.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to commend the member from Niagara for his tenacity on his portfolio and his dedication towards transportation in Ontario. But I also want to recognize an individual whose driveway I finally had the opportunity to walk up. We had a chat in his driveway. His dedication towards getting this forward—I was introduced to him through my colleague from Timmins–James Bay and then through our discussions. Gerry, you need to take a bow because it was your tenacity working with the member from Niagara,

that got this here today. Congratulations, Gerry Rhodes; this is on you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Niagara Falls, you have two minutes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I really do appreciate all of my colleagues standing up and talking on this bill.

Like my good friend here, I would like to talk about my colleague from Burlington, because when you're in this place, sometimes the personal stories really touch home. When you have somebody stand up and say, "I lost my husband," and to share that today, the effect it has on your family and on your kids, and she is still fighting to make things better for others, I want to say thank you very much.

To my good friend from Kitchener-Conestoga, I really appreciate his comments and the fact that he read out the petition, which I was going to do tomorrow. So I want to say thanks to him as well.

I want to tell a story about the two guys who are here. I had the privilege of meeting them, almost two years ago now, in Niagara Falls. To my colleague's comments: He never gave up. He never gave up on this issue. He remembered his friends who were killed that day. He dedicated the last 10 years of his life to try to get to this point where the Legislature's elected officials from right across the province of Ontario would understand and give the opportunity to get this past second reading, maybe get it into committee and even make the bill better. So I want to say thank you very much, but also to take the message back to the motorcycle riders who do a lot of good stuff in our communities today. In our community we have a big ride for cancer that they do every year. Last year we had a family that needed a hand up, and who came to their aid? They did a motorcycle ride around the Niagara region. So take the message back. They do great work, we appreciate it, and hopefully my colleagues will pass this on your behalf. Thank you very much for being here.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll take the vote on this item at the end of private members' public business.

CUTTING RED TAPE FOR MOTOR
VEHICLE DEALERS ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 ALLÉGEANT
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES
POUR LES COMMERÇANTS
DE VÉHICULES AUTOMOBILES

Mr. Clark moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 152, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act /
Projet de loi 152, Loi modifiant le Code de la route.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure to stand here today to begin second reading debate of Bill 152, the Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2015.

I first want to take the opportunity to thank the three House leaders for their co-operation in allowing this last-minute change for me to debate this bill today. I had planned to have a much different discussion this afternoon, but the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing gave me and would-be homeowners across the province an early Christmas gift this week. So, Speaker, if you'll pardon the pun, given the topic of my bill, I have shifted gears today.

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm sorry. You didn't like that joke.

First of all, I just want to take this opportunity to thank a number of people who helped me with this bill. First, in the west members' gallery, I'd like to introduce and thank Frank Notte from the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association. Thank you, Frank.

I'd also like to give a shout-out to the auto dealers back home in my riding of Leeds-Grenville; there are three from Brockville that I'd like to thank in particular: Dave Watson of Pastime Motors, Arnold Dixon from Kia of Brockville, and Ted MacMillan of Riverside Chevrolet Buick GMC. I should highlight that Ted was just named Brockville's 2015 business person of the year by the Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce; I want to congratulate Ted for that.

Much of what we debate on Thursday afternoons in private members' public business has its origins or concerns that were brought forward at our constituency offices. These few hours we have each week provide us with the opportunity to provide a solution for those problems. That's what I'm trying to do with Bill 152. As members can see, the bill isn't very lengthy, but it does address a specific issue, one that affects auto dealerships in communities across the province. So I guess the question that some members might want to ask me is: How did we get here?

Over the summer, several car dealers raised concerns to me about a situation at the ServiceOntario office in the city of Brockville. This wasn't a complaint about the staff at this location; actually, the dealers were quick to say how friendly and efficient the ServiceOntario employees were when they could finally get to the wicket. That was the problem: the wait to see them. Their employees were wasting dozens of hours every week in line waiting to have their paperwork processed for vehicles sold or leased on their lots. It wasn't uncommon for them to spend a couple of hours or more waiting around on each visit. At certain times during the week there was a dedicated wicket, but not enough to meet that demand.

That meant dealership employees, usually with multiple licences and registrations to process, had to wait their turn in line with the general public. To make matters worse, they could only do two transactions at a time. That meant they had to pull another number, and wait again and repeat it again if they had more than four, which sometimes they did. This was a very cumbersome process.

Obviously these delays were a significant cost to the dealerships, especially when you multiply it over the

thousands of transactions every year. As businesses priding themselves on outstanding customer service, they had another concern: They were seeing customers growing increasingly frustrated as they waited anxiously to drive their new vehicle home. As we all know, customers today don't hesitate to go online to rate every aspect of an experience with a business. They were justifiably concerned that these delays, which were completely out of their control, would affect their overall ratings on some of these consumer websites.

I was able to arrange a meeting with Arnold, Ted and also with Bob Watson. We went and met with the local ServiceOntario manager. I have to tell you, it was a very frank discussion, but it was clear that with the budget constraints that all ServiceOntario locations were under, a solution was not at hand. That is what brought Bill 152 forward today.

As I mentioned, it is a pretty straightforward bill—it's very tiny compared to many private members' bills that get tabled here—and it removes the need for dealership employees to physically attend at a ServiceOntario to complete licensing and registration transactions for customers. It does this by amending the Highway Traffic Act to add a section authorizing electronic applications by motor vehicle dealers on purchases or leases. The new section 6.1(1) of the HTA would allow "a motor vehicle dealer registered as a general dealer under the Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, 2002" to "do any of the following by electronic means or in an electronic format:

"1. Apply for a permit, number plates or a validation for a vehicle under subsection 7(7).

"2. Apply for a new permit for a vehicle under subsection 11(2).

"3. Apply for a used vehicle information package under subsection 11.1(2).

"4. Anything else as may be prescribed."

That's it, Speaker. It's certainly not a government omnibus bill that we've seen in this Parliament, but it's legislation that I think—and I hope some of my colleagues today will agree—will provide a significant benefit for this important sector in our economy. Bill 152 does exactly what the Ontario PC caucus is constantly asking the government to do: It cuts red tape to save businesses time and money while allowing them to serve their customers better.

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I want members to hear why the Trillium Automotive Dealers Association is a strong supporter of this bill. I'm going to read to you an excerpt that Frank Notte, the director of government relations with Trillium, wrote to me. Here's the excerpt from the letter:

"Auto dealers spend a considerable amount of time, money and resources in order to go above and beyond expectations, and to ensure the proper and quick delivery of the vehicle to the customer.

"However, there is considerable cost in both time and money. If passed, Bill 152 will dramatically cut down on this expense and make the vehicle purchase transaction

more efficient and convenient for both the dealer and the customer.

"Dealers will not have to waste time sending a person to a local licensing office in order to process the registration. And consumers will not experience a delay in order to take delivery of their vehicle—which is often a very exciting time for families.

"In effect, the dealership's business hours will determine when the vehicle can be registered—not the local licensing office."

His letter continues: "Bill 152 will allow the car dealership to become a one-stop shop for customers. Theoretically, a person can sign a purchase contract and register the vehicle all in the same day, perhaps within hours—without having to return to the dealership to take delivery of the vehicle.

"For dealers in areas of the province where a licence office is far away, this bill will have an even greater impact. Dealership employees will not have to waste time travelling far distances numerous times to provide this service, and can use their time more productively to running the business.

"Bill 152 is a vital tool that supports Ontario's auto sector.

"Too often, the retail side of the auto sector doesn't receive the attention it deserves. While auto manufacturing may grab headlines, it is the retail side where the rubber hits the road.

"This bill will help Ontario's 1,000 new car dealers save time and money and give them the tools to provide a more convenient customer service experience."

That's the quote, Speaker. I thought it was very important to bring Frank's comments forward today because they confirm what I said earlier about the benefits of Bill 152.

I do want to take a moment, Speaker, to say something about ServiceOntario. I don't for a moment want anybody to presume the legislation is a reflection on the services offered by front-line staff working in these offices. As I said earlier, the dealers that I spoke to and who met with me in my office and at ServiceOntario had nothing but praise for the staff in Brockville.

Besides removing auto dealer transactions from the equation, it will free up ServiceOntario staff, I believe, to look after everyday Ontarians coming in, to help them do it more quickly.

Bill 152 reflects the reality of the world we live in, where just about every transaction can be done on a smart phone: We buy and sell stocks; we pay our mortgage; we apply for new government identification; we renew licence plate validation, and just about everything else in between. It's the way Ontario is today. All of this is done at our convenience, safely and securely, without having to spend time waiting in line. We can use the same technology to create a secure system and reduce red tape for auto dealers. It's not like we're steering down an untravelled road.

Again, a highly secure system, I should tell members, is already working in Quebec. In that province, new car

dealers and, as of April 2015, some used car dealers can also do the following: They can license a new or used vehicle. They can register a new or used vehicle. In Quebec, you can change and confirm operations, consult a vehicle's ownership history, register vehicles in stock, and order forms and official documents. If they can implement this system in Quebec, we can do it in Ontario.

In fact, we've done it in this province already. Members of this House will be very interested to know that the government conducted a pilot project on in-house vehicle licensing and registration in 2011. Two test dealerships were involved—one in Peterborough and one in Belleville. I have to say that the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs will be very, very familiar with this pilot. He was featured prominently in an article about how well it was working for Peterborough's Trans-Canada Nissan.

As he stated in that Saturday, April 23, 2011, article in the Peterborough Examiner—I'm now quoting the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Jeff Leal, "After they go through this pilot period, we will put together the data and this will be the basis of introducing this service to all dealerships right across the province of Ontario.... This is the kind of initiative that the Peterborough dealers have been asking me for.... We believe the data we put together here will serve us well as we bring this service right across Ontario." He concluded, "This is about providing better consumer service."

You know what, Speaker? I agree with Jeff Leal, the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Perhaps, in a real world where I could have gotten to him sooner because of the changes this week, he might have even co-sponsored this bill. Who knows?

We can help auto dealers serve their customers better by modernizing our vehicle licensing and registration system. We have the data from the government's pilot project, which, by all accounts, were very well received. My plea to members today is, let's get the bill into committee, let's put the data from the pilot project into the mix and let's get on with modernizing this aspect of our government services.

I welcome the input from my colleagues this afternoon, I'd appreciate their support and I ask for their support for Bill 152 at second reading.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Once again, it's an honour to be called upon to speak in Ontario's provincial Parliament this afternoon, on behalf of the good folks in Windsor-Tecumseh. I'll be speaking to the private member's bill brought forward by my friend from Leeds-Grenville, Mr. Clark.

I have to tell you, Speaker, that there are two ways of looking at it. I'm going to give you perhaps the more positive side, and I think my friend from Algoma-Manitoulin may have a little different way of looking at this bill.

Speaker, let me tell you that as a reporter, reading news stories about a boy wonder from Brockville back in

the early 1980s, there was this 22-year-old young man with a mop of curly hair. He had little to do after graduating from the University of Waterloo, so he ran for mayor and became the youngest mayor in Canada, at that time, being re-elected several times and serving for what—10 or 11 years?

Mr. Steve Clark: Nine.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Nine years. Little did I suspect, back then, that I would one day be serving here in the Ontario Legislature with that same boy wonder and have the chance to discuss his private member's bill this afternoon.

I have great respect for the member from Leeds-Grenville, as we do all in this House. He's a former president of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Speaker, and that means a lot to me because, as you know, I served several terms on the AMO board. I also served as the chair of the Large Urban Mayor's Caucus and as AMO vice-president. I never did get to run for president; I ended up here, for some reason. But I have great respect for those who serve in that capacity, because I know and appreciate the amount of time it takes to serve as president of AMO—time away from your home, your family and your other municipal duties back in your home community.

His Bill 152 is called Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act. It's a short bill, less than 20 lines. I guess the bottom line and the intent behind his proposed legislation is to make the working lives easier for Ontario's 8,000 car dealers and the more than 26,000 men and women who work as sales staff at those dealerships. In order to simplify their lives, the member from Leeds-Grenville says they should be able to apply online for motor vehicle permits or licence plates, or to get a used vehicle information kit. That would certainly speed things up for the rest of us when we're in line at ServiceOntario offices.

Much has been said over the years by all three political parties about the need to reduce red tape. Red tape, Speaker, is an idiom: "a group of words that have a meaning to most of us that are not deducible from the individual words." For example, if we hear someone say that the drinks are on the house, we don't go running up to the fourth floor and climb out a window to try to get one of those free drinks.

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So it is with red tape. There's no actual tape, but "red tape" is an idiom that Wikipedia says "refers to excessive regulation or rigid conformity to formal rules that is considered redundant or bureaucratic and hinders or prevents action or decision-making. It is usually applied to governments, corporations and other large organizations."

There's another definition that says that red tape is the "collection or sequence of forms and procedures required to gain bureaucratic approval for something, especially when oppressively complex and time-consuming."

If you don't like that one, Speaker, here's another one: Red tape is the "bureaucratic practice of hair-splitting or

foot-dragging, blamed by its practitioners on a system that forces them to follow prescribed procedures to the letter.” Red tape includes “filling out paperwork, obtaining licences, having multiple people or committees approve a decision, and various low-level rules that make conducting one’s affairs slower, more difficult, or both.”

I’ll conclude with the definitions by saying that red tape can also include “filing and certification requirements, reporting, investigation, inspection and enforcement practices, and procedures.”

You can understand why many of us would like to see more red tape cut out of our everyday lives.

I have a roll of red tape in my office, Speaker. I was going to bring it down with a pair of sharp scissors this afternoon, but I knew you would say I couldn’t use a prop, so I’m prop-free.

Congratulations to the member from Leeds–Grenville for bringing this bill forward. He’s plowing ahead with his determination, and he gets that grit from when he was the founding chair of the International Plowing Match committee back in Leeds–Grenville in 2008.

This bill is simple in nature, and I must say that I’m looking at it from the perspective that if you sell cars in Ontario, you’re part of the Ontario automotive industry. In my community, we build cars, and we make a good living at building cars. They say that for every job in the plant—what is it; six, seven or eight—

Mr. Wayne Gates: Seven.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: —seven other spin-off jobs are created for every job created in the assembly plant. If we can make life easier for anyone in the automotive industry, make it easier for them to sell the cars we build, then we want to stand up for that and make it happen.

That’s why I’ll be supporting this bill. I think it makes sense. I’d say it makes common sense, but then again, somebody would say, “No, no, we had a Common Sense Revolution here not that long ago”—what, 1995 to 2000? I know some people would like to forget that.

Let me just say let’s get on with it. Let’s pass Bill 152 and stand up for the automotive sector in our great province. Thank you for your time this afternoon.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Chris Ballard: I’m delighted to be able to speak to this bill, Bill 152, the Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act, which was introduced by the MPP for Leeds–Grenville.

I am personally all in favour of cutting red tape. I don’t think there’s anyone in this House who would disagree with that. I’ve had some success and great pleasure in working with government services to look at our Corporations Act in terms of how we can revamp that and make it easier for businesses to do business in Ontario. This debate is a continuation of that type of discussion.

This is about customer service. This is about supporting businesses in our communities, especially our smaller communities, which don’t have access to numerous ServiceOntario outlets. I understand that.

I know that as a government, we’ve worked to support a competitive motor vehicle sector, and we’ll review any initiatives that aim to streamline the processes for Ontario vehicle dealers. I’m pleased to support this private member’s bill as it moves through second reading and gets to committee, where we can give it that fulsome debate that it deserves.

With regard to this bill, it’s also important that the government carefully consider the impacts on ServiceOntario, which we understand could be significant. ServiceOntario is constantly reviewing technology, with openness to digitizing government services when doing so benefits Ontarians. Over 11 million online transactions are completed annually through ServiceOntario, so clearly ServiceOntario has some expertise when it comes to using the Internet to digitize transactions with the public.

The government has shown leadership, I believe, in this area, as the first province in Canada, for example, to provide drivers with an online licence renewal service. I took advantage of that this year, Mr. Speaker, and it certainly made life a little bit easier for me, not having to mail things in or go stand in lineups—just to go online, and with a few clicks of a button, the work was done for me. In fact, that accomplishment was applauded by the Auditor General in her 2015 annual report.

We’ve also made available over 40 types of online transactions, including business name registrations, land searches and birth certificates.

As I said earlier, to get this right—it may seem like, off the top, a very simple request on behalf of car dealerships, but it has to be done right. Times change, technology changes, and I know that today we have to be so careful with anything government does online, especially with private information. It’s just not as easy as it was five or 10 years ago. We have to make sure that there is security in place and that there is a very robust process in place to make sure that the transaction is secure and that storage of information is secure. I know that this is something that, perhaps, off the cuff, is not as easily done as we would assume, and I know that ServiceOntario and government services would look at it very closely and give us their opinion in terms of how it might be done.

There are a number of implications involving costs, the IT applications and security of personal information that would have to be thoroughly studied for the government to move forward with the proposed legislative amendments.

As I said at the outset, we value our relationships with motor vehicle dealers, and we’ll continue looking for ways to support their sector as they move ahead with this and other ideas.

Technology like this has made our lives so much easier in so many ways, when we can just rely on the Internet and log on to a website and click a few buttons and click a few boxes and we’re done, rather than physically having to take paperwork, perhaps, and go into a lineup. I can see how it would frustrate a dealer if they have to spend a fair amount of time, if they have to spend

resources, in terms of personnel, to go and line up. I certainly wouldn't want to see a process that upset a customer because the customer might think it takes a bit too long for them to get their new car. Having been a new car owner myself just a short while ago, you want to get into that shiny new vehicle as soon as you can, and if it involves the dealership taking two or three extra days to get your licence, that might be a problem.

The private member's bill, as I said earlier, could have significant impacts on ServiceOntario and its operations. ServiceOntario has investigated electronic registrations for motor vehicle dealers in the past, and it will continue to look for ways to cost-effectively expand online access to high-demand services for individuals and businesses. We value our relationships with our partners and service providers, and we need to carefully consider them in any decision-making process.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say that I wanted to share my time with the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore and allow him a few minutes to speak further.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to comment on this forward-thinking, red-tape-reducing private member's bill brought to the floor by my colleague from Leeds–Grenville.

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I also want to recognize another good friend of ours in the press gallery here, Frank Notte from TADA. Frank, thanks for joining us today.

As we've heard, the Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act would do just that: cut through the red tape that wastes both the time and money of auto dealers and their employees seeking to simply do their job. As that job is to sell cars in Ontario and support our auto sector, I see it as a timely initiative we all can get behind.

As we've heard the member explain, this bill would allow motor vehicle dealers to initiate a series of transactions electronically, transactions like applying for a permit, number plates or a validation for a vehicle, or applying for a used vehicle information package. Transactions like this, while relatively easy to process and complete in principle, can provide long-line headaches and paperwork for people who could be spending their wasted lineup time and effort in doing what they do best: selling vehicles. It's a prime example of some of the over 380,000 regulations and red tape that tie down businesses in Ontario and choke off progress that they might otherwise be moving forward on, if we could provide a simpler way of meeting the need for these transactions without the forced, lengthy visits to the local ServiceOntario desk.

The bill before us today helps to provide that simpler way, Speaker, allowing vehicle dealers to get the transactions done in a timely fashion, made possible by today's secure electronic technology, so they can get on with the job. That, too, is the key point. We all do share concerns when it comes to electronic transactions and the

ongoing need for security, but the fact is that the technology exists. Technology is already in use to ensure that the straightforward transactions covered by this bill can be done both safely and securely by dealers. We see it every day in today's society, where consumers and businesses increasingly conduct transactions electronically. Today's bill simply calls on government to move in the same direction to meet their demands.

As we heard, this proposed red-tape-reducing solution is nothing new. We're not blazing any trails on our own here. We're simply talking about adopting some best practices—best electronic practices, in this case—that have been put in place in other jurisdictions, and even piloted here in Ontario to allow businesses to move ahead.

Our neighbours in Quebec are already enjoying the ease of service a highly secure system can provide, allowing dealerships and some used car dealers to electronically license and/or register a new or used vehicle, among a number of other initiatives.

As we've also heard, dealers in the Cobourg area have already benefited by a ServiceOntario pilot project on electronic registration.

We have the technology. We have the security. We have the ability. Now it's time to look at allowing the groundwork to take hold across the province, to relieve vehicle dealers of the red tape burden facing them every time they sell a car, truck or motorcycle.

Dealers across the province know all too well of the time-and-effort-consuming impacts of the current regulatory regime that is involved with the mandatory service visit. That's why the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association, representing over 1,000 new car and truck dealers in Ontario, has pledged their support to see this through. In fact, TADA would like to see more transactions added eventually.

Not only would the changes called for in this bill benefit the vehicle dealers, it would also benefit those government representatives at ServiceOntario themselves. It's a win-win, Speaker, and I'm hopeful the members opposite will help us to ensure that we put this winning proposal into action.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to commend the member from Leeds–Grenville. He brings an issue here to the floor, something that he's passionate about, something that comes from his riding, and I commend him for that.

However, I also come with great passion from people across my riding in Algoma–Manitoulin, and also as the critic for northern development and mines. I need to speak as to why we're talking about Bill 152 today, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act. Why is it here today, Mr. Speaker? Quite frankly, it's because of the cuts and all the slashing and burning this government has been doing to the public sector and to all sectors across this province. That's why we're talking about this.

The member talks about the message that he's hearing from the dealerships in his riding. What are they getting in these dealerships?

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Yes, absolutely, they're wasting a lot of time waiting for permits when they're going over to ServiceOntario counters. Why are they wasting a lot of time? Because of cuts this government has done, because of services that they have removed, because of hours they have cut, because of services they've taken away from these individuals.

Let me back up here a bit, because this is something that I have been talking about for a very long time in this House, because of how disconnected this government is with northern Ontario issues. Not every issue can be fixed with a white paintbrush, as this government does and as they proceed with. There are things that operate differently in northern Ontario. There are distances that we have to factor in. There are travel costs. There are seniors. There are vast distances between our companies. That has to be considered.

Now, don't get me wrong: The individuals who work at our ServiceOntario counters are, bar none, some of the best individuals that we have working in the public sector. They go out of their way each and every day to assist individuals, to make sure that when a licence is needed, or when a permit is needed, or when an individual can't come to their ServiceOntario office or can't do it within hours—you know what they do, Mr. Speaker? They actually take the time; they take the file—not on paid time—and they go out of their way to meet up with them before the day starts, to make sure that that permit is done, that that truck can leave the yard with that overload, or that senior who cannot come in is provided with the service they need.

But guess what? By cutting the hours and reducing the employees who work in these areas, they are having the negative effects as to why we have Bill 152 with us here today. That's what is happening. It was clear in the comments that the member from Leeds–Grenville came with today.

Yes, I've heard from car dealerships in my area as well that they are challenged. They can't close a sale on a Friday afternoon. "Oh, why?" "Well, ServiceOntario has cut their hours and they are closed at 2, and in order for me to close a deal at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, I'd have to wait until Monday. But the individual who was in on to buy a vehicle is from out of town. He won't be staying here all weekend for the deal, so I've lost a sale." Those are the challenges that are happening in northern Ontario.

But wait a second: It got even better. In order to provide the ServiceOntario kiosk services that they needed in northern Ontario, the government went out and said, "You know, let's privatize some of this. Let's make sure that all the areas have an individual service and that everybody within a 100-kilometre radius has the service that they need from a ServiceOntario office."

How did they entice people to come in? They introduced a stipend; that's what they did. They got individ-

uals to open up ServiceOntario kiosks. First, they got them to buy the services that they need. They bought the tools that they need, the technology that they need and the insurance that they required in order to provide this service. Once they did that, they tied them in to a four-year contract. Then, all of a sudden, in the fifth year: "You know what? We're going to take away that stipend now. Now you're going to have to work on fees. These are the fees that you're going to have, and you have to survive on those fees. That's how you're going to operate."

You took away over 60% to 70% of their annual income, which is what they were using in order to provide the service to many of the communities, and said, "You know what? Too bad. Diversify. Wait a second. We're going to provide you with the health card photo ID in order for you to renew the health cards. That will help you out. Wait a second. We're also going to give you the ability to use the sticker, and you can go put the sticker on that senior's plate and charge them a fee." Are you kidding me? That's the way that they're going to bring services to northern Ontario and across this province?

Mr. Speaker, there's a problem; there definitely is a problem. But introducing bills like this is not going to solve those problems. The way we're going to solve this problem is by investing in our public sector, recognizing the work that they do, the quality that they do, recognizing that if we are to open up this can of worms, there are definitely going to be questions in regard to oversight and transparency that we need to deal with. Information is going to be out there for other individuals who do not have the right to have access to that information.

There's a problem here. We have the ability to fix it by cutting the budget, cutting their cuts, slashing jobs, slashing amounts. Taking away the rightful, experienced individuals that we have in our public sector, doing their jobs, is not the way of fixing these types of problems.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It's a pleasure to rise in the House this afternoon to speak to Bill 152, Cutting Red Tape for Motor Vehicle Dealers Act.

I want to congratulate the member from Leeds–Grenville for being able to switch gears so quickly to bring something forward to cut red tape rather than cutting red herrings, as he was earlier this week.

Mr. Speaker, that was supposed to elicit more laughs.

Interjection: I got it.

1530

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: In any case, this bill proposes to make it easier for motor vehicle dealers to get a permit, number plates, sticker validations and used vehicle information packages, all online. This is certainly something that, in the 21st century that we find ourselves in, is the direction we should be going.

Our government has actually done a great deal to reduce red tape, and there are ongoing initiatives to do more of that. I think this ties nicely into the approach to

try to make it easier to do business in this province and to provide more convenience and more choice to individuals and businesses. So I do endorse what the member for Leeds–Grenville is trying to do with this bill.

Certainly ServiceOntario does provide exemplary service to both businesses and individuals throughout the province. This isn't about the quality of service they provide; this is about providing more convenient services for Ontarians. There are already so many services that as an Ontarian you can do online in terms of licence renewals and plate renewals and so on, so this is very much in keeping with that.

The only caveat I would put here is that, as we know, with IT projects there are risks. The risks can be the protection of privacy of individuals, as was the case with some ServiceOntario kiosks that had to be removed because there were fears about the security of the information that was being transmitted through those kiosks. But there are also the risks of, whenever you bring in a transformative piece of technology, whenever you transition from an existing system to a new system, can you do it on time and on budget?

This is not unique to our government. At the city of Toronto, where I had experience, this was always a challenge. I know many of my friends in the private sector and in the financial services sector can also tell you some of the horror stories they have had dealing with IT projects. So it's not just government; it's the complexity of IT projects. That's a little bit of a concern for me here. I don't want to go down a road of just quickly pursuing this type of technology and end up with additional costs for government, and certainly I wouldn't want to create additional costs for auto dealers. I wouldn't want us to have to turn around and pass those additional costs on to them, so a plate renewal or new licence plate ends up costing more than it did before—there would be convenience, but there would be additional costs.

I think if we do this carefully and methodically, we can get to this point. So I'm happy to support the member's bill at this stage. I think it does need to go to committee. I do think it needs some further study. We need to get the information that was collected from the pilot project that the government has already done. I think with that careful study and thoughtful and methodical approach, we will be able to get there, to cut red tape for automobile dealers in this province.

I take seriously the comments of the member from Algoma–Manitoulin that you don't want people to be told, in an Amazon and eBay era, that they can't complete their transaction because it's 4:30 in the afternoon on a Friday. We do need to get to that point where we can be part of the digital economy as a government as well. I think we're moving in that direction. We're making great progress. This is another area where we can make progress. I don't think it's quite as simple as the member for Leeds–Grenville may think it is, but I think we will all get there if we work together on this.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm glad to stand in support of my colleague from Leeds–Grenville's bill before the Legislature today. I want to say that this member, Mr. Clark, has a knack for these pieces of legislation where they make you say, "What the heck? This is actually really a rule in our province?" Not too long ago, he brought forward a bill where he changed it so that dentists could once again treat members of their own family. There was a bizarre ruling in the province where dentists could not treat their spouses or their kids, which was preposterous. Mr. Clark, the member from Leeds–Grenville, said that this made no sense and brought in a bill. It has now been fixed in the province of Ontario.

He then said that housing costs were expensive enough, that homes were becoming increasingly out of reach for average families and new Canadians, so he brought forward a bill to stop a new land transfer tax from being imposed in the province. He was successful in that; he got the minister to act.

Now, it's number three for the hat trick in allowing car dealers to give even better service to their customers. I want to say that it's been mentioned that Frank Notte, head of Trillium Automobile Dealers Association, is here today. I'm going to mention for the first time in Hansard that Frank and his wife, Sue, recently brought into this world a son, John Michael Notte—very special. Frank's dad was a great man. I got to know him much over the years. We had a lot of good conversations. He passed away not too long ago, and Frank named his son after his dad. I thought that was very, very sweet.

Frank always reminds us when he's here lobbying that we talk about the auto sector—it's important to the province of Ontario—but we often leave out the dealers when we talk about the auto sector. We think of the manufacturers, but the dealers actually comprise over 49,000 men and women in this province. They generate \$29 billion in activity with 600,000 automobiles sold in the province—new cars sold in the province each and every year. If we can make that easier and they can hire more people, God bless, all the better for it.

Look, one of my favourite writers, P.J. O'Rourke said, "A little luck and a little government are necessary in life, but only a fool trusts either of them." Government's role is to help willing partners facilitate contracts. We have legal systems and a little government to ensure that's the case. We have mechanisms to make sure that those agreements are transparent and people have full and equal knowledge. There are some activities for which we need a licence, like owning or operating an automobile. But does the government actually have to make you come before them to fill out all the paperwork or is that a thing of the past? Instead of a dealer in Beamsville or Smithville having to go to the ServiceOntario office and have to drive even farther, why don't you bring the ServiceOntario office directly to the dealer? You can do that electronically these days and save a lot of time and aggravation, and let us all take home our new vehicle sooner and show it off to our wife or kids, or friends or what have you—take it for the proverbial first spin off the lot.

I think there's more to do. This is an important first step. I think Mr. Clark, the member for Leeds–Grenville, put it in the realm of immediate doability—if that's a proper word and parliamentary, Speaker—to allow it in these circumstances. Then they can look to have even more electronic service delivery for automobiles or others down the road, like Quebec has done, for example, allowing the payment of fines that may be outstanding on a licence or registration—to facilitate a transaction like this would be another example—or transferring a leased car to permanent ownership.

This is an excellent move by Mr. Clark. He's on a roll. I think he's going to score the hat trick and put three pucks in the net before Christmas. I'm proud to support the bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Bill Walker: I, too, commend my colleague and MPP for Leeds–Grenville Steve Clark for putting this bill forward. As my colleague Tim Hudak just said, he is on a roll for the hat trick. I respect Clarkie's work and believe he truly knows the pulse of not only the people in his riding, but of people across the province.

With Bill 152, he's essentially looking to cut red tape and free up front-line staff at ServiceOntario and the dealerships. His private member's bill is in response to concerns he has heard—that many of us have heard in this House—in regard to car dealers who are growing frustrated over the cost and the time wasted in having staff line up at ServiceOntario to complete simple paperwork.

I understand this concern is also echoed by an umbrella organization, the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association—I too would like to applaud Frank on the arrival of his new son—which represents over 1,000 new car and truck dealers. They represent a very active and vibrant industry all across communities in Ontario.

Consider the volume of sales, Mr. Speaker, that's involved. In September alone, 178,681 cars and trucks were sold across Canada. A chunk of that activity happened right here in Ontario with 70,202 new car sales in that single month. In October, deliveries in Ontario rose 6% in the first 10 months of 2015, and sales grew 10%. In fact, industry analysts predict vehicle sales are on track to hit another annual record. When the auto manufacturing industry and the dealerships are rolling, so is Ontario's economy.

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Bill 152 would allow motor vehicle dealers to complete all of these transactions electronically, including applying for a permit, number plates or a validation for a vehicle, or for a used vehicle information package.

I want to share a little story: One of my colleagues, Jimmy McDonell from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, bought a new car recently. As we're all aware, we're here most of the week—lots of people work in a community other than where they live. But he could not get his vehicle for an extra week because he couldn't get home on Friday while the ServiceOntario office was

open. He had to wait yet another week and had to go without a vehicle for a week. That's not very productive for our economy. So this makes sense all across the board.

It means submitting all required documentation without that time-consuming visit to the government office. We have the technology. It exists today to ensure that these transactions can be done safely and securely. In fact, similar programs are in place in the US, where they have existed for some 20 years already. One of the colleagues across said it has to go to committee and be done very slowly and methodically. I think the time is here. As well, Ontario itself successfully completed its own pilot project in Cobourg.

I want to stress that the number one benefit of the proposed changes for consumers is that they will be able to receive their registration and licence plate at the point of sale. This bill will improve efficiency and save businesses money while improving the customer experience when purchasing or leasing a vehicle.

I'd also like to add that Bill 152 will make the registration process more seamless and potentially improve the buying experience. It is, however, designed to implement the changes in a responsible way. This is done with the express effort to help the government avoid their typical pitfalls like with eHealth and SAMS, where the latter amassed \$140-million worth of mistakes in welfare payments, according to the 2015 Auditor General report.

I would also respectfully suggest that the responsible minister may want to fast-track Bill 152 and help free up front-line staff processing the high volume of dealer applications they do currently. Allow them to focus on other priority areas. As we are hearing, the minister is dealing with a possible backlog at his ministry with regard to medical reviews. When people are held up because of those medical reviews, it impacts their ability to work and it impacts their driving privileges to get to such important things as their doctors' appointments, work, volunteer opportunities and all those types of things that we all encounter.

The medical review section is mandated to review cases and take appropriate action within 30 business days. I have a gentleman in my riding right now who is a truck driver employed in the snow removal area. He cannot get his licence because of a technicality, and they won't even look at it for 30 days. If we could free up the time that's spent with all these vehicle registrations and, as my colleague said, bring it right to the dealership, there would be a lot more time for front-line staff to work on these very important medical reviews. It's especially critical in our rural ridings, where driving plays such a crucial, important role in all of our day-to-day living.

We ask the House to support Bill 152. It's a win-win for consumers and dealers and one we should all get behind.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I now return to the member for Leeds–Grenville. You have two minutes.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank all the members for their very kind words: the member for Windsor–Tecum-

seh for his little bio on me—that was very nice and I really appreciate it—and the members for Newmarket–Aurora, Kitchener–Conestoga, Algoma–Manitoulin, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and Niagara West–Glanbrook.

I also want to say that the member for Mississauga–Erindale and I had a chat during debate and I appreciate that the pilot project was done under his watch as minister. I want to thank him for his kind and encouraging words while the debate was going on.

I also want to say something in response to my friend from Algoma–Manitoulin. I do share some of his concerns. I have a small village in my riding—the village of Westport—and they were going to lose their ServiceOntario contractor because of illness. The ministry obviously couldn't do their due diligence; they couldn't find an operator. I found one. About an hour ago, I found a business that now wants to take that over. So I share some of his concerns about the government's policy that an MPP has to go out and shake the bushes to try to get somebody to take over a ServiceOntario location in a small community.

I've tried to keep my focus very narrow with Bill 152. It does authorize dealers to do a number of things through regulation. It's one of the sections. I did that because of what was said yesterday by the Auditor General. She had a very cautionary tale about what can go wrong when you rush into a new electronic system. I know that it has been acknowledged that we could have gone a lot further, that there were a lot more suggestions, but I tried to keep the focus very narrow in this bill to get it moving and to get it accepted.

The fact that I'm limiting it to permits, number plates, validations, new vehicle permits and used vehicle information packages was done for a reason. I think it allows us to address the major problems facing the auto dealers while also ensuring that a system is running and is working.

Once we've had a chance to test drive it, hopefully it will get into committee and we'll be able to move it forward, get it passed and move this issue.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We'll take the vote at the end of private members' business.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS
AMENDMENT ACT (TEMPORARY
HELP AGENCIES), 2015
LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI
(AGENCES DE PLACEMENT
TEMPORAIRE)

Ms. Malhi moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 143, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to temporary help agencies /
Projet de loi 143, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne les agences de placement temporaire.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: For a number of years now, temporary workers have been advocating for strengthened protections that will respect their rights as employees.

During the election campaign in 2014, I was often asked about what our government would do to strengthen protections for these workers. The proposed legislation we are debating today will ensure that workers get their fair share while businesses do their best to hire and retain staff for the long term.

There are many temporary employment agencies operating across the province—about 100,000—and over 600,000 people in Ontario have temporary jobs. I believe that the time has come to ensure that temporary employment agencies meet certain standards as set out by the provincial Legislature.

Ontario's labour market is changing and has been over the past decade or longer. There's a growing trend of part-time work, many times because Ontarians can't find full-time positions that pay enough to make ends meet. Finding full-time work is especially challenging for young people who are just starting out their careers or for those who are older and trying to move into a new career, as well as for newcomers to our province and visible minorities. It can feel like a Catch-22 situation: You need experience to get a job, but you can't get experience without working. Sometimes the answer people are turning to for this situation is a temp agency.

Temporary employment agencies find workers for companies that need people to fill in on a short-term basis. They're also called "assignment employees" by some. The employer company benefits because it doesn't incur all of the administrative costs of placing an ad, interviewing and, in some instances, training a new employee. The company also saves by paying a flat hourly rate to the temp agency, which issues a paycheque to the temporary workers and handles all the payroll withholding and benefits.

The temp agency finds workers and places them with the appropriate company, and the temporary worker is on the job only as long as they are needed, which could be for a few days, a few weeks or a few months. However, sometimes people end up working as a temporary worker at some companies for years. The amendments to the Employment Standards Act that I'm proposing will address this situation.

Temporary employment agencies are set up to benefit both the employer and the employee. The benefit for the employer is the ability to try out potential candidates for permanent jobs. The benefit for the temporary worker is the potential for the temporary position to blossom into a permanent, full-time job. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this is not always how the scenario goes.

There are many different types of temp agencies. Some specialize in particular industries, such as computer technology or accounting, and others specialize in

certain types of jobs, like managerial or administrative. Still others hire low-skilled or semi-skilled workers to build—manual labour jobs—particularly during peak season for the business.

Ultimately, those looking for work should look into several temporary agencies before they choose one to work with. They should ask about placement fees and how long the typical time is between assignments, if they provide training and whether they provide any benefits. In addition, there should always be a contract signed with a temporary agency—a contract that is clearly understood by both parties.

For whose desire it, part-time work can offer flexibility and an element of freedom. Working at a temporary agency provides an opportunity to see what different company cultures are like and what you prefer as an employee. It's an opportunity to determine whether you like a fast-paced environment, enjoy sitting at a desk or working with the public, and find out what you're good at and what you really want out of a job.

As a temp worker, you'll be represented by an agency with more contacts than you could ever develop on your own. The agency has the knowledge of who is hiring and what skills and knowledge they are looking for. When you work with an agency, you come with a seal of approval and are well ahead of the applicant who walks in off the street.

Once on the job as a temp, the employer gets to see your work efforts and how well you fit into the company or the job. Ultimately, a short-term assignment will turn into a permanent job offer.

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Many temp jobs offer the flexibility of working for a few weeks, while the assignment lasts, and taking some time off once it is over. Not too many people have the luxury to take time off in between assignments, however, so it's best to know what the temp agency's job placement rate is like.

Being laid off from a job is sometimes an opportunity to move on to a more lucrative career. Taking courses at the local community college or adult education school will teach you new skills, but nothing teaches you as well as personal experience. The combination of classwork and on-the-job experience is the ideal way to prepare for a new line of work. If you can prove to a temp agency that you have some basic skills, they will likely place you in jobs where you can work under supervision and further enhance your skillset.

Unfortunately, there are downsides to temp work, as well. Temporary workers may feel isolated, as they do not know any of the full-time employees. Temporary workers are often made to feel temporary and treated like second-class citizens. There's a lack of certainty in regard to income. The agency may not pay health insurance or contribute to a pension plan or provide paid vacations.

Also, Mr. Speaker, I am regretfully aware that there are employment agencies that take advantage of vulnerable workers. All individuals who use employment agencies to assist them with finding employment in On-

tario must be protected, whether they are just starting out in the job market, older and laid off from a job due to downsizing, new to Canada or struggling with a physical or mental illness that keeps them from full-time employment.

Those who are often desperate to find employment can find themselves being manipulated by temporary help agencies who want them to utilize their services. Often, they are the most vulnerable workers, those who do not know how to stand up for themselves and their rights.

There are agencies that do not provide temporary workers with access to benefits and protections offered to standard, full-time workers. For many years, this issue has been a subject that I hear from constituents: basic employment rights and respect for temporary workers; payment of holiday and termination pay; and clear information about contracts and stopping the practice of temp agencies charging prohibitive fees to workers.

One of the changes that this bill proposes, Mr. Speaker, is to establish a licensing regime for temporary help agencies. Anyone who wishes to carry on the business of a temporary help agency must submit an application to the director of employment standards and shall give the director any information that he or she requires and pay the prescribed fee.

The director shall issue a licence to an applicant who agrees to abide by this act and who satisfies the prescribed requirement, if any, for the licence unless the director believes, on reasonable grounds, that the applicant is not suitable to be licensed.

Further, the director may impose condition on the licence when it is issued. The licence will have an expiry date, as set by the director of employment standards, and an application for renewal must be made before the expiry date of the current licence. During the application for renewal of the licence, the current licence shall continue in effect, as long as the renewal application is submitted by the deadline requirement, until the director notifies the applicant whether it has been renewed or refused to renew.

Secondly, an applicant applying to renew a licence will be required to submit certain information, such as the number of hours worked by each assignment employee for each client and for each workweek in the previous six-month period; and a declaration that certifies the applicant's temporary help agency is in compliance with the act, signed by the applicant or a director or officer of the applicant.

In fact, this information shall be required to be reported to the Ministry of Labour in a semi-annual report, submitted each year on or before September 1, with respect to the first six months of the year, and, again, on or before March 1, with respect to the last six months of the previous year, so that they can show they are complying with the amendment being proposed in regard to the 80% wage requirements. Any other information prescribed within the licence shall also be required to be reported.

Another proposal within this bill would allow the director of employment standards the ability to suspend

or revoke a licence should the licensee cease to satisfy the prescribed requirements, is no longer suitable to be licensed, or any other matters the director considers appropriate.

Should this legislation pass, a temporary help agency shall be required to pay an assignment employee at least 80% of the amount that the agency charges its clients for the employee's services. This amount will not, in any case, be lower than the minimum wage applicable in the province of Ontario.

This measure is intended to help ensure temporary workers receive equal and adequate compensation for their work. It would also ensure that temporary work arrangements remain in the best interests of the worker that is being placed.

Further, this bill proposes that each employer ensures that the total number of hours worked by assignment employees in a workweek does not exceed 25% of the total number of hours worked by all employees, including the assignment employees, in that workweek. This is intended to ensure that the number of temporary workers in any establishment does not exceed 25% of the total permanent workforce, so that temporary workers are not used as a long-term staffing strategy. This also provides temporary workers who are seeking long-term employment with the opportunity to develop meaningful long-term employment.

There is a provision for exemption to this prohibition in certain circumstances, such as an employer with fewer than 10 employees or an employer who experiences a temporary increase in business volume, such as casual seasonal workers. This bill, if passed, would provide the opportunity for an employer to apply to the director of employment standards for an exemption from compliance with this prohibition.

Some of these proposed changes are seemingly basic rules, insofar as they require employment agencies to implement what most of us likely regard as good business practices. This legislation will allow the province to monitor the use of temporary workers and current labour trends, as well as reduce the ability of agencies to intentionally evade labour-related costs.

The goal of this legislation is to ensure that temporary agencies respect the employment rights of temporary workers. My bill proposes changes to the Employment Standards Act that will help vulnerable workers and low-income families who work hard to contribute to this province, while cracking down on temporary help agencies that exploit short-term and assignment employees.

Temporary agencies are an important part of our economic recovery. They're an important part of getting settled or even just getting your foot in the door with a potential employer. That being said, the workers deserve a fair share of the wages being paid, and employers should always do their best when it comes to retaining their own workforce. Requiring a licence to operate will ensure that these rules will be followed.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the private member's bill introduced by the member from Brampton–Springdale.

Looking after the rights and safety of workers in Ontario is one of the most important tasks this Legislature can perform on a regular basis. All governments in Ontario have passed various pieces of legislation designed to adapt to the ever-changing conditions of work and employment in our province. As a Legislature, we have to continue to raise the bar with respect to workers' rights and protections in Ontario. I think that is something we can all be proud of, at the end of the day.

Bill 143 is another piece of legislation that aims to highlight the need for this Legislature to look at some of the trends of employment in Ontario, so that we can adapt the Employment Standards Act accordingly. As the explanatory note says, Bill 143, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to temporary help agencies, will amend the ESA "to establish a licensing regime for temporary help agencies and to require them to pay their employees at least 80% of the amount ... for the employees' services. It also requires employers to ensure that no more than 25% of the hours worked by their employees are performed by assignment employees.

"Temporary help agencies are prohibited from operating without a licence. The procedure for applying for a licence from the director is set out. The director also has the power to suspend ... licences.

"Temporary help agencies must pay their employees at least 80% of the fee they charge to their clients for the employees' services. Temporary help agencies have to submit a semi-annual report to the minister that declares they are in compliance with this requirement."

Also, "Employers must ensure that no more than 25% of the total number of hours that are worked by their employees are performed by assignment employees. There are exemptions from this requirement for employers with fewer than 10 employees and employers that have experienced a temporary increase in business volume. Employers can also apply to the director for exemption from this requirement."

There are certainly some interesting ideas in this bill, and I believe that further work needs to be done to look at the impact of the various aspects of the bill. If this bill moves to the committee stage, I would like to see a thorough and in-depth review. Before this Legislature can make any decisions on the merits of this bill, we need to hear more from the stakeholders in the staffing service industry as well as from workers who have had experiences, both good and bad, when using staffing services.

Also, I believe this Legislature needs to hear from the Ministry of Labour on this particular issue. I understand that the member from Brampton–Springdale's colleague the Minister of Labour has been busy this last year conducting an official review of the Employment Standards Act with industry stakeholders.

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The Changing Workplaces Review is being led by two special advisers: Mr. C. Michael Mitchell and the

Honourable John C. Murray. In their review, the Minister of Labour and these two gentlemen have been looking at, among a number of things, non-standard employment, which includes involuntary part-time, temporary, self-employment without help, and multiple-job holders.

I've had the opportunity to work with the Minister of Labour on a number of issues in my riding of Sarnia-Lambton so I fully anticipate that the minister and the special advisers have been actively engaged in discussions with a broad group of stakeholders. I'd be interested to hear the comments of the Minister of Labour on Bill 143 and, if and when the Changing Workplaces Review is finalized in the coming months, if the minister will be recommending changes to the ESA that will mirror what is in Bill 143 or not.

In preparing to discuss this bill, I was also reminded that the Minister of Labour amended the Employment Standards Act with respect to temporary employees as recently as 2014 by passing Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act.

The question for consideration before we vote today should be: Since Bill 18 only received royal assent on November 20, 2014, has enough time passed that the members of this Legislature can accurately assess what the impacts on working conditions have been for temporary employees? Of course, I am aware that there have been a number of media stories in recent months about the experiences of individuals who have been working as temporary employees. I do believe that there's a need to look at employment practices in Ontario.

Before having the privilege of coming to Queen's Park as the member of Parliament for Sarnia-Lambton, I've had the good fortune of working almost my entire career for the same employer. I realize that not everyone has had that luxury. In fact, just earlier this year, I finally retired from NOVA Chemicals in Sarnia-Lambton after 37 years of service.

I understand the desire of individuals to be hired on as full-time, permanent employees. There's a sense of security and achievement that comes with that designation, and I certainly had the privilege of enjoying that. From my time at NOVA and working in Sarnia-Lambton's petrochemical industry, I also understand why companies utilize staffing services or temporary help businesses.

A recent study of this subject by the Montreal Economic Institute cites a poll of employers on why they use staffing agencies to meet employment needs. Their responses were as follows: 52%, unexpected growth; 47%, unexpected and long-term absences; 47%, to bridge to a permanent replacement; 36%, for special projects; 28%, seasonal rushes; and 21% for the pre-selection of candidates.

These numbers indicate that businesses are using temporary help agencies as a short-term solution to remain competitive and adapt to the rapid pace of change in our economy. Of course, as with any industry, there are going to be a few bad apples in any group. Bill 143 may address the issue of the fly-by-night staffing agencies that are taking advantage of workers. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, some workers may find themselves to be too

intimidated, worried about losing a much-needed job, or just unaware of their rights under the ESA to speak out.

Again, I would like to hear the Minister of Labour's comments on the ESA in its current version and if he or his ministry think it needs to be amended further so that there aren't rogue agencies taking advantage of vulnerable workers.

In my own riding, I know that we have a number of staffing agencies that operate with the highest standards of integrity and respect for workers. I had the opportunity, as I said, in my former employment with NOVA Chemicals, of working with a number of those agencies where we placed temporary staff. They reported through me and other individuals within the company, and those companies provided excellent staff. They screened them before they came to us and they looked after their time-keeping and payroll.

I was very satisfied with the work that they put out and I know that my company, NOVA Chemicals, was as well because they still continue to this day to employ those people and those companies that provide those people. Some people have been there—they're the next thing to full-time employees, they've been there that long. They enjoy many of those benefits that full-time employees do.

Mr. Speaker, my office participates annually in a pay-it-forward program that is organized by one of the local firms, Express Employment Professionals, that helps to place local workers with business during the busy holiday season.

I would like to see that same standard of professionalism advanced across the province, maybe led by MPPs' offices or federal members of Parliament's offices, where when we have people take vacation, or because of workload—Christmas cards at Christmas etc.—we would give these employees, these temporary help people, an opportunity to come to work in a provincial, federal or municipal office and give them an opportunity to experience some type of work where they would have the opportunity to actually use those skills.

I've been very satisfied. One of my EAs, Michelle Roe in my office, administers that for me every year. We're very happy with the people and the calibre of the people they advance to us.

I would like to say in conclusion that I believe the issue that Bill 143 is attempting to address is one that the members of this Legislature should certainly take a closer look at. I've always believed that along with family, a good job—and with it, a sense of belonging—is the best foundation for a person to build a life around. Full-time, permanent employment is the standard that we all want to achieve. How many of us in this Legislature have fielded calls from parents or grandparents in our riding concerned about the lack of availability of good jobs for their children or grandchildren? I know I hear about it on an ongoing basis.

Working conditions in this province are changing. Part of that has to do with changes in our economy, part of that has to do with government policy and its impact on employment in Ontario, and part of it has to do with the

emerging sectors of our economy and the demand for workers. I'm certainly looking forward to seeing the final copy of the Minister of Labour's Changing Workplaces Review to get a better understanding of how this government will form these policies moving forward.

Bill 143 addresses an issue that's certainly going to be covered by the Changing Workplaces Review. If this bill passes today and goes to committee, I would like to see a very thorough examination of the bill by that committee. I would also like to see the possibility of the Ministry of Labour and the member from Brampton-Springdale working closely together to coordinate their efforts so that members of this Legislature from all three sides, along with many workers and employment agency stakeholders in Ontario, have a clearer understanding of this government's policy direction on staffing services and temporary workers' rights.

I'd like to applaud the member from Brampton-Springdale for bringing this legislation forward. I think it's a good example of this Legislature—all afternoon, we've been debating different bills. I think it's what makes this Legislature so unique: that on Thursday afternoons, we have private members' bills on anything from licensing to labour issues. I think that's what makes this a stronger and better Legislature, when our private members are able to debate their private members' issues that have come up in their ridings and bring them forward.

This clarity will be of benefit to everyone when we do address this bill. On that, I look forward to the rest of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I am honoured to join in the debate. I want to begin by saying, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the member from Brampton-Springdale that I commend her for bringing forward a bill that addresses a very important topic. I want to thank her for doing that and I invite everyone to give her a round of applause for bringing forward this bill.

Applause.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It's an important topic and, as the member who brought the bill forward knows, it's one of the major issues impacting people in our ridings and in our region. The region of Peel and Brampton specifically are hard hit by precarious work. It's an issue that impacts people across the GTA. In fact, it's something that's Ontario-wide.

It's an issue where we are finding increasingly that people cannot get full-time employment. People are struggling to find full-time jobs and instead have to rely on temporary job agencies.

The agency was designed initially—the idea behind it was that people needed to find employment, an employer needed to find people who were willing to work, and they connected the two. The idea was that you would work for a period of time with this company, through an agency, to eventually get a full-time job. But the reality is that people are working year after year through the same agency, working at the same job, but never getting a permanent position. This is unacceptable. This reality is

all too true for many people in this province, and it is simply unacceptable that this is the condition.

But let's look at some of the history. How did this come to be?

While I commend the member for bringing this bill forward—and I know the member is a new member—it is under this government that this industry has seen some of the most tremendous growth. What I mean by that is this: Ten years ago, if you look at the number of temporary job agencies that existed in this province when this government took office in 2003, you'll see that they ballooned exponentially. Right now, as of December 2015, there are over 1,045 temporary work agencies in this province as a result of this government's policies.

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In fact, Sara Mojtehdzadeh reports in a newspaper article on May 10, 2015, "The province's employment services sector earned \$5.7 billion in revenue in 2012, a near 72% jump from 2002." That's about 10 years. That's a 72% increase in profit. To continue the quote: "Temporary agencies account for an estimated 60% of that industry's total revenue." What that means is this colossal increase, this exponential growth in profit is directly as a result of this government's leadership over the past decade.

It's this government that has created the circumstances where people are struggling to get full-time employment. It's this government that has allowed for the proliferation of these temporary job agencies. It's this government that has created this plight in Ontario. While I commend the member for bringing forward the bill, it's this government's policies that have created the conditions that made her bill necessary in the first place. It's this government that has created the conditions in which people are now struggling to get full-time work in this province. It's this government that has created the problem, and I doubt that this government can find the solution.

Now, if you look at the reality of temporary employment, one of the realities is that temporary and precarious employment means that people are going to earn less. That's a reality. When you earn less, you're more likely to fall into poverty. That's just one of the many negative impacts of precarious employment. So one of them is that people who don't have full-time work, people who have precarious employment are more likely going to fall into poverty, are more likely struggling to make ends meet.

In addition to that, there are far greater implications, far worse implications. Not only do you suffer poverty, which is one of the worst things, but people have less engagement in society. People are less likely to be engaged in civics. According to the United Way and McMaster report, people are even less likely to want to attend parent-teacher conferences because having employment, having a job gives you a sense of self-worth. Without having permanent employment, people feel that they don't have any value in society, so people are even less likely to engage in their civic responsibilities, their civic duties, and be able to assist in their child's upbringing, because they don't feel they have any sense

of value, any sense of worth. This is such a pernicious problem and has such a devastating impact on our society that we really need to look at its severe impact to understand how important it is for us to address it.

Now, an issue has come up about the reality that the temporary workers have to face. The circumstances are such that if you work in a precarious employment position, if you work through a temporary agency, often the agency can take a huge portion of what you're earning. A company may provide a salary of \$20 an hour, which is a very livable salary, but the temporary agency can take up to 40% of that, sometimes even half of that, so you're left with just a minimum wage job. Now, putting in a condition that limits that is a great step, but why is it that the same worker working the exact same job, with the same level of experience, the same time on the job, whether they're permanent or temporary, should be paid any differently at all?

Why should it be the case that a temporary worker gets paid less than a permanent worker? Why shouldn't it be the case that the temporary work agency can take a finder's fee, can take a fee, but the fee is from the employer directly? It doesn't come out of the wage of the employee. Why does it have to come out of the wage of the employee? I think we need to think beyond this. Why is it the case that, under the current law, under this current government's regime, it's harder to employ someone in a permanent job position and it's easier to hire them through a temporary agency? Why is that the case? Shouldn't it be easier to hire someone permanently? Shouldn't it be easier to give someone a permanent job? Wouldn't we want to encourage that? That's not the case right now in Ontario.

Right now, in Ontario, if someone is working through an agency, you have to pay a penalty fee. The employer needs to pay a penalty fee to be able to hire that temporary worker. That's outrageous. The fact that that's the law in this province is outlandish. It's unacceptable. How could that exist, Mr. Speaker? This is simply unfair. This is unjust and it needs to end.

While we absolutely need to do something about the current plight, the current condition faced by temporary workers in this province, we also need to acknowledge that it's under this government that we've gotten to this point. We have to acknowledge that it's this government that's created these conditions. This government has created the laws which have allowed these temporary agencies to proliferate. It's this government that's created the conditions where this industry has enjoyed such colossal profits. They're only profiting because this government allowed them to do so. I don't blame the temporary job agencies as much as I blame the government that allowed these policies to exist. If there's a market that's available, people are going to move into that market and try to make some money. But if the government doesn't protect the workers, if the government doesn't stand up for workers' rights, then it's the government's responsibility to make sure that they stand up for those workers.

We've talked about some of the far-reaching impacts of precarious employment. The additional reality is that, right now, in this province, precarious work and temporary work is the new reality. It's the new norm. People are finding it harder and harder to find full-time employment, to the point that we consider precarious employment as the norm, that to get a job, you need to work through an agency.

We were talking this week about a very serious and sensitive topic, an issue around violence against women. One of the issues that's been raised by other people who have far more experience than I do in this field, but I want to also add my voice to it: The root causes of violence against women—many of those roots lie in the inequity and the imbalance of power. One of those issues is the inequities in pay and the disparity in terms of those who are able to access resources and those who cannot. Often it's women who face this unfairness more than men. If we want to address the power imbalance in society, we also have to factor in that precarious employment impacts racialized people and women far more than anyone else. If we really want to get at some of the root causes of this power imbalance, we have to address the reality that precarious employment is impacting racialized people and it impacts women. If we don't address it, it's women and racialized people who are going to suffer the brunt of this issue.

While work needs to be done—and again, I want to commend the member for bringing forward this bill—we also have to realize that there's a lot more that this government needs to do. I would have loved to have seen this as a government bill—to see that the government had some initiative behind this, that the government stands up for this issue. Though we see the member has definitely shown her interest, I'd like to see the government come forward and support a government bill to make sure that this change happens.

I'd like to see more widespread and sweeping reforms so that temporary agencies are curtailed and that we can see more permanent employment becoming the norm, and that it becomes easier to employ someone in a permanent fashion instead of the current circumstances.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I have enjoyed my time. I, again, thank the member for bringing forward this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Before I begin, I want to introduce my new executive assistant, D.J. Bhat. He is new to government and he's here to watch the proceedings today to get a bit of a flavour of what we do here. So D.J., welcome.

Mr. Speaker, it's an honour to speak on this bill, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, Bill 143, with respect to temporary help agencies. I want to congratulate my colleague the member from Brampton—Springdale for bringing this very important bill in front of the House that affects so many of our constituents.

This issue is very near and dear to me because since I became an elected member of this House, I've been

working on this issue and our government's been working on this issue. In fact, this was one of my first acts as an MPP, bringing the issue forward from my riding. I remember sitting in a committee meeting. I was new; I didn't know how to approach the bureaucracy with respect to the different issues that come up. There were some people from the Ministry of Labour, and this was the first action I took as a government member with respect to the various issues and especially this one. This is a very, very important issue in my riding; in fact, not just in my riding but in the 905, the region of Peel area.

1620

Temporary agencies, I believe, are necessary, but ones that operate under the rules, and there are many good ones. Our government is not saying that temporary agencies should be banned, because we do need them for certain types of businesses. For example, I remember that when I was a teenager, that there was a company in my riding called Carlton Cards; I think the House and people watching can recall this name. They predominantly make greeting cards such as the Christmas cards we send each other at this time of the year.

Many people in my riding worked there. I know that some of my family and friends—my friends' mothers—worked there. It was a yearly thing, and they got paid well, they got benefits and they got all the things a regular full-time employee would get. Those are the types of temporary agencies or businesses which work under the temporary agency name that we need.

This becomes a problem when you have these fly-by-night operators that have not much more than a cellphone and a contact at a few companies, that all of a sudden call themselves temp agencies. As far as I'm concerned, a lot of their practices are questionable. Some of the bigger concerns with these people are that they at times do not pay even the legal minimum wage; don't pay for holidays, vacation or overtime; and you can't even talk about benefits when we're speaking about these people.

I feel so strongly against these types of people. I think it's so un-Canadian. That's not what we're known for across the world. We're known as people who look after one another, people who are compassionate and people who have a standard of living. We're a society that stands up to maintain that standard of living. This goes totally against what we as Canadians are all about.

These fly-by-night operators are literally pinning people against the wall financially, and it's definitely not right. We as a government take many initiatives to help people with a hand up, in terms of different types of benefits. We increased funding for health care and education; we increased the minimum wage so that people can have a sustainable standard of living. These folks do everything to go against that.

This bill brings two very important changes that I feel are needed. The first one is to ensure that temp employees receive at least 80% of what the temp agency receives from the employer. This is very important. In my experience, I rarely hear of temp agency employees earning a decent wage. Usually, it's right at the legal

minimum wage mark, and this is not right. People are making incredible amounts of profit at the hands of these people, who often are new immigrants.

Immigrants come to this country for a better future. They don't have the time or resources to wait or to look for a job that pays them well—that's a permanent job. They take any job they can get, because they have pressures just like any other person. They have kids that are young, they have to pay for their education, they have to rent or buy a place and there are all kinds of bills to pay. So these people are sort of backed into a corner, and it creates a very unfortunate situation.

One small thing before I end is that I want to talk about the second aspect of this bill, which I think is very, very relevant in terms of tackling this problem. It is that no more than 25% of the total workforce can be temp workers. This is very important, because I have seen many, many companies who have totally transformed their workforce. What I mean by that is that they have taken the entire full-time workforce and have gotten rid of them and brought in totally new people, who obviously cost them less, but there's a bigger cost; that is an issue on its own. But they have totally replaced their entire staffs with temporary workers just for the sake of saving money.

I know the MPP from Mississauga—Springdale—

Interjection.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Mississauga—Erindale—I've taken a little bit of his time, and I apologize—I know that he has some very important remarks to make.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm hoping that we can get support from all sides of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to say that I think we had three very good bills today and we had a great discussion. I think nobody has a monopoly on ideas, and when the good bills come, we should all support them.

I'm going to talk about Bill 143, but I want to say something about Bill 152. I think Bill 152 is a very good bill. I had the opportunity to actually introduce the first trial on that. I think what this government is all about, what we should be all about, is providing good customer service, convenient to the people, and this bill does exactly that.

The other thing is, whenever you make any changes, there are always some challenges, but that's why you look at them in the first place and see that you can address them.

Talking about this bill, Mr. Speaker, there are three issues with this bill, or three main segments of this bill. One is that the temporary agencies need to be regulated. This bill does that.

The second thing this bill talks about is that fair wages should be paid to the people. This bill does that to a very large extent by saying that 80% of the wages that the temporary agencies charge to the employer should be paid to the employee. So it does that.

The third thing is the issue about what "temporary" is. We have seen that in some cases, the temporary workers

last for years and years. That is not temporary. That is actually permanent. What this bill does, is it takes into account the total number of hours worked in an organization, and the temporary workers should work only 25% in total.

Our government has done a lot. The law has been changed several times. My colleagues from Brampton–Springdale and from Brampton West have done a lot of work on this. I had introduced almost the same bill in the last Parliament. I really want to say congratulations to both the members from Brampton who have done a lot of work on this.

This bill is a good bill. What it does is, it basically puts a defence around the issues that are really bothering us. It is one thing to stand up in the House and criticize every time, but the other thing is to actually put some constructive suggestions that make some sense. I think today what we have seen is there are some good bills that have come forward, and this is one of those good bills. I think this needs to be supported.

I want to say I actually started in a temporary job when I came to Canada. That temporary job then became a permanent job and it gave me the experience that I needed to be successful in life. Then, for almost the next 20 years, I held very senior jobs in finance and in business, and that has helped me and has helped the economy.

What this bill does is strike a good balance between the employer's needs and the employee's needs. We need temporary agencies, but we also need to look after the interests of the business people. We understand that sometimes business people need flexibility. That's why this bill also gives an exemption to small business people whenever there's an increase in the workload of the business as well.

It's a good bill. It strikes a good balance. It addresses the issues that need to be addressed. The purpose of a bill is always to bring in and address the issues that are facing the community, and I'm very pleased that this bill does exactly that.

Temporary workers come in several forms: They are seasonal, they're casual, they're contract workers, and sometimes we call them by other names. The temporary help agencies also serve a very good purpose, because when new people come to this country, sometimes their experience doesn't get recognized and the temporary help agencies give them a chance to be employed and seek for them some employment. So they serve a good purpose.

1630

But, at the same time, what we want to make sure is that temporary workers are treated fairly and are treated the way our society wants to treat the people who actually work in our workforce. So it addresses all these issues.

I am very, very glad to support it and I'm very glad to support Bill 152, as well.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? I now return to the member from Brampton–Springdale—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's always good to speak in the House. I want to commend the member from Brampton–Springdale for bringing this forward. But really, really, I've been here—I'm in my ninth year now. This is the second time a bill like this has come forward. How long does it take, Mr. Speaker? Twelve years for a government to act on a pretty obvious problem in the employment field?

Let's just put this in perspective. This is against a background where only one out of 100 employers ever gets a visit from the Ministry of Labour—one in 100 ever gets seen. I have people complaining in my constituency office that they don't get paid. They just don't get paid. That's how bad it is in employment in Ontario. We have almost half of our workforce working in precarious contract, temporary work—almost half—and one employer in 100 ever sees an enforcement officer.

So, guess what? We're going to do the revolutionary act here of forcing a temporary agency to get a licence. Whoop-de-do. Really? They're going to hang a piece of paper on their wall. They're never going to see anyone from the Ministry of Labour, just like every other employer out there in Ontario, and this government is going to pretend that they've actually done something to address this problem.

So, yes, thank you, Brampton–Springdale, for bringing it forward. Would it be that the corner office and your cabinet would listen to you, because they're clearly not. That is the situation of employment in this province. It's horrendous. This is a thumb in the dam of the overflow of the nightmare of employment, and I guarantee you, Mr. Speaker, it won't make a difference.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Brampton–Springdale, you have two minutes.

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Thank you to the member from Sarnia–Lambton for your remarks and the members from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Mississauga–Erindale, Brampton West and Parkdale–High Park.

We do understand the need, as the member from Sarnia–Lambton acknowledged, for a review. As you know, the ministry is undergoing a Changing Workplaces Review to continue to look at the bigger and more broader issues. This is a specific issue that I did want to bring light to. I do appreciate your comments.

As a former school board trustee, I completely understand where the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton is coming from and how the whole family unit is impacted by the socio-economic status of a family. I understand the need for secure employment. I understand the need for a stable income for families and for children to be healthy, and I respect that. That's why we need to have ways to protect our vulnerable workers and our communities that are most in need.

I want to thank my colleague from Mississauga–Erindale for his support through bringing this bill forward and the bill that he has brought forward in the past, as well as

my colleague from Brampton West. As he pointed out, newcomers are the people who are most affected by this.

My colleagues across the floor must understand that over the past decade many newcomers have entered the workforce and there have been many changes in the workforce, and we're trying to address those changes. This is just a start to addressing those changes, and our ministry will continue to work towards addressing those changes.

Unfortunately, although we may believe that the government alone controls the economy, the reality is that we don't. We are here to establish regulations to protect our citizens, and this is exactly what this bill does.

I want to thank everybody for speaking to my bill today and I look forward to your support.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT
(CONTRAVENTIONS CAUSING DEATH
OR SERIOUS BODILY HARM), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE
(CONTRAVENTIONS AYANT CAUSÉ
UN DÉCÈS OU DES BLESSURES
CORPORELLES GRAVES)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 9, standing in the name of Mr. Gates.

Mr. Gates has moved second reading of Bill 154, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to create an offence of contravention causing death or serious bodily harm.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—the member from Niagara Falls?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Legislative Assembly, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to Legislative Assembly. Agreed? Agreed.

CUTTING RED TAPE FOR MOTOR
VEHICLE DEALERS ACT, 2015
LOI DE 2015 ALLÉGEANT
LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES
POUR LES COMMERÇANTS
DE VÉHICULES AUTOMOBILES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Clark has moved second reading of Bill 152, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—the member from Leeds–Grenville?

Mr. Steve Clark: The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has referred the bill to Legislative Assembly. Agreed? Agreed.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS
AMENDMENT ACT (TEMPORARY
HELP AGENCIES), 2015

LOI DE 2015 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI
(AGENCES DE PLACEMENT
TEMPORAIRE)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Ms. Malhi has moved second reading of Bill 143, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to temporary help agencies.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—the member from Brampton–Springdale?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Justice—social justice.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member has requested that the bill be referred to—

Ms. Harinder Malhi: Justice policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): —to justice policy. Agreed? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SEXUAL VIOLENCE
AND HARASSMENT ACTION PLAN ACT
(SUPPORTING SURVIVORS
AND CHALLENGING SEXUAL
VIOLENCE
AND HARASSMENT), 2015

LOI DE 2015 SUR LE PLAN D'ACTION
CONTRE LA VIOLENCE
ET LE HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS
(EN SOUTIEN AUX SURVIVANTS
ET EN OPPOSITION À LA VIOLENCE
ET AU HARCÈLEMENT SEXUELS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 2, 2015, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 132, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to sexual violence, sexual harassment, domestic violence and related matters / Projet de loi 132, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne la violence

sexuelle, le harcèlement sexuel, la violence familiale et des questions connexes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I recognize the member for London West.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: When I left off yesterday, I was just about to turn to schedule 4 of Bill 132. That is the section of the act that deals with workplace sexual harassment.

The amendments that are set out in Bill 132 to deal with workplace sexual harassment are certainly welcome. However, one of the frustrations of many worker advocates is that there are already existing provisions to protect workers from workplace sexual harassment that have been, frankly, ignored. However, the new amendments that are proposed address some of the weaknesses in Bill 168. Members will recall that those were the amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act that were introduced in 2010 to add explicit reference to workplace violence and workplace harassment following the murders of Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont. Bill 168 clarified that workplace harassment is a hazard covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, but it did not explicitly require employers to take reasonable precautions to prevent harassment and to investigate complaints.

Currently, we have an Occupational Health and Safety Act in which the only thing that inspectors are empowered to do is to check to see if employers have a policy to address violence and harassment. Inspectors have no power, no authority to look at how effective the policy is: Is it a good policy? Will it actually protect workers? They also have no authority to order employers to investigate complaints properly, and to carry through on the results of the investigations. This is a big gap that we heard about frequently at the select committee.

Despite the provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code, which already protects workers against sexual harassment, and despite the protections of Bill 168, we know that sexual harassment and violence is the reality in many workplaces across Ontario, which is why we have these amendments before us today.

Before I go into detail on schedule 4, I do want to read from the It's Never Okay action plan. On page 25 of the plan, it says that the government will be introducing legislation that would "include an obligation for employers to make every reasonable effort to protect workers from harassment, including sexual harassment, in the workplace." Unfortunately, however, schedule 4 does not include this obligation for employers. What it does include is a new definition of workplace sexual harassment which is added to the act, and that definition is similar to what is contained in the Human Rights Code. It also clarifies that workplace sexual harassment does fall within the existing definition of workplace harassment, just in case there was any confusion.

1640

As I indicated, under Bill 168, the obligation of employers to protect workers from workplace harassment and violence only applies to their having a program and a

policy in place. They do not have the obligation to investigate and address complaints that arise. Bill 132 addresses this gap by requiring employers to investigate and address workplace harassment, including sexual harassment, and it also sets out a process that employers are supposed to use to deal with incidents or complaints of workplace harassment. Employers are required to take the following actions in order to protect workers from sexual harassment: They must investigate and address sexual harassment incidents and complaints; they must inform the parties in writing of the results of the investigation and the corrective actions taken; and they must review their workplace harassment program at least once a year to ensure that it adequately implements the policy they have.

I want to point out that the proposed amendments identify both incidents and complaints. This means that employers have an obligation to investigate not only when a worker complains, but also when the employer becomes aware of incidents of possible harassment. So it will be very important that employers and managers be trained in not only how to conduct an investigation, but also when to conduct an investigation.

One of the most important changes proposed in schedule 4 is the ability for inspectors to order an employer to retain an impartial third party, at the employer's expense, to conduct an investigation into alleged incidents of workplace harassment. The legislation is unclear right now on the circumstances that could trigger such an investigation, but some possible circumstances could include: an employer failing to do an investigation; an employer doing an inadequate or improper investigation; also, a Ministry of Labour blitz uncovering some problems within a workplace, in which case this power could be triggered, for an inspector to order an investigation.

There is no question that the Ministry of Labour will need to hire more inspectors to deal with these new provisions of the act. These new inspectors will also need comprehensive training so that they understand what workplace sexual harassment is, what the unique dynamics around sexual harassment in the workplace are; and also that they have the cultural competence training they would need in order to be able to investigate and enforce.

Speaker, there are a number of areas in this schedule of the act that we believe offer opportunities to strengthen and improve this legislation. Many of these issues were identified during the presentations that the select committee received.

First, as I indicated, the act does not include an obligation for employers to make every reasonable effort to protect workers from workplace harassment and sexual harassment. We would like to see the act amended so that it follows the model of Saskatchewan, which explicitly requires employers to prevent exposure to violence or harassment.

Second, there currently is no right in the schedule for workers to refuse work that exposes them to harassment. The current act does allow workers to refuse unsafe work

if they believe that workplace violence is likely to endanger them, but it is not extending this right to refuse unsafe work to conditions of sexual harassment. This is a particular concern for workplaces that tend to have higher levels of harassment, like the hospitality industry. We know of young women who work in bars, specifically, who may be frequently subject to sexual harassment and will not have the right to refuse work that exposes them to this kind of harassment. Many of these kinds of workplaces—the hospitality sector, for example—tend to employ a lot of low-wage, precarious workers who are particularly vulnerable because they feel that they have no option but to put up with the sexual harassment they're experiencing if they want to keep their job.

Another issue, Speaker, is that the amendments do not address the critical role of joint health and safety committees in addressing issues related to overall workplace culture. We believe that employers should be obligated to consult with the joint health and safety committee when they are developing their workplace harassment and sexual harassment policy, and they should also be required to notify joint health and safety committees of the incidents and complaints of workplace harassment that they investigate. This would be important so that the committees can make recommendations about ways that the employer can reduce exposure to violence and harassment in the workplace, and protections for workers can be improved.

Another issue: There's no requirement for employers to inform workers about customers, students, patients, clients etc. who may have a history of harassment in that particular workplace. Informing workers about this potential exposure would allow workers to take preventive action to protect themselves in advance. They could arrange to have a co-worker present with them when they have to work with this problem customer or client.

Another issue: The amendments do not include reprisal protections, so workers could be subject to discipline for making a complaint about harassment at work.

There is currently an exclusion under the Occupational Health and Safety Act for domestic workers. This is not addressed, again, in schedule 4. This is a problem, because we know that domestic workers are particularly vulnerable to harassment, sexual harassment and sexual violence. The 2010 expert panel review of Ontario's prevention system recommended already that the exclusion of domestic workers from the Occupational Health and Safety Act be addressed so that they receive that kind of coverage as well.

Another issue: Schedule 4 does not address the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, which does not allow WSIB claims for gradual onset psychological injuries due to chronic harassment, including sexual harassment. What it does allow is physical injuries. To discriminate against psychological injuries versus physical injuries has already been found to violate Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is a very significant omission. It violates the rights of workers to receive compensation for the injuries that they experience in their workplaces.

Saskatchewan has already shown leadership in addressing this in its occupational health and safety legislation, and Ontario should do that, too.

A final issue, Speaker, concerns domestic violence in the workplace. This was the whole reason that the amendments in Bill 168 came forward in the first place. Theresa Vince and Lori Dupont were both workers who carried their domestic violence with them into their workplace. We know that domestic violence does not stay at home. It follows women into their workplaces and has a very significant impact on the workplace.

1650

There was a recent national research study that found over 40% of women who experience domestic violence at home talk about it, most often with a co-worker. They talk about it in their workplace. So there is a very important moment when a co-worker, if they are trained to recognize the signs of domestic violence, can intervene and refer that woman who is experiencing domestic violence at home to an appropriate support service or intervention.

Bill 168 requires employers to provide information about domestic violence in the workplace, but we know from the national study I just mentioned that there are fewer than a third of workplaces in Ontario that are actually providing this information, even though they're obligated to.

The Ontario government funded a really robust education tool for workplaces to use, to raise awareness about recognizing the signs of domestic violence—it's called Make It Our Business—but we heard during the select committee that only 1% of Ontario employers are accessing this training tool that was funded by the government to educate workplaces about how to recognize the signs of domestic violence. So we believe that schedule 4 should include a provision to make education of employers, managers, supervisors and employees about domestic violence mandatory in the workplace instead of voluntary. We see such an incredibly low rate of pickup of this voluntary program that we need to do something to get that education into Ontario workplaces.

Finally, there is a need—we would have liked to see in this legislation new provisions to allow victims of domestic violence to take paid leave. Again, the government of Manitoba has shown some leadership on this issue; Ontario should do the same.

The last schedule of the bill, schedule 6, amends the Residential Tenancies Act to shorten the time required to end a lease or tenancy agreement when there is sexual violence or domestic violence. This will make it easier for survivors to flee abuse. It will remove a barrier for people who feel trapped in a housing situation and feel they have no other choice but to stay in a potentially dangerous relationship. This is good. No question: We support it.

However, we need to remember that the housing needs of women fleeing sexual violence or domestic violence go far beyond being able to break their lease. They need access to affordable housing, emergency housing,

second-stage housing. They may have very limited income with which to pay for new rental accommodations: to pay the damage deposit, to pay first and last month's rent, to pay moving expenses. Many times in abusive relationships, the abuser controls the bank account, so the person who is being abused may not have access to credit cards or any kind of financial assets that she will need in order to start in a new housing situation.

Just this week, we saw the Toronto Board of Health pass an action plan on intimate partner violence. That plan urged the provincial government to provide capital and operational funding dedicated to increasing the availability of affordable housing, emergency housing and transitional supportive housing to those affected by intimate partner violence for exactly the reasons I just spoke about.

I want to just highlight several themes that run through all six schedules in this legislation. We saw that schedules 1, 2 and 6 make explicit reference to both sexual violence and domestic violence. I've already highlighted where domestic violence was not addressed in schedules 3, 4 and 5 but should have been. We heard over and over again at the select committee that the artificial separation between sexual violence and domestic violence has to stop. The consequences—the same guilt, fear and shame—are carried with the victim for years, whether it is sexual assault in an intimate partner relationship or whether it is a domestic violence relationship that involves sexual abuse.

We know that in cases reported to the police, 80% of sexual assault survivors knew their abusers. We also know that 38% of sexually assaulted women were assaulted by their husbands, common-law partners or boyfriends.

Regardless of these statistics, what we have seen over the last decade and a half is siloed funding for sexual violence and domestic violence that really limits the ability of community agencies to coordinate and integrate services on the ground. This must change, Speaker. We need to have a much more integrated and coordinated approach, more generally, across ministries.

Secondly—and this is an issue I have spoken about on numerous occasions—we need to look at other ways to hold perpetrators accountable for their violence. Currently, the only way we have to do that is through the justice system. But we know from statistics I shared already that most women do not report, so the abusers do not go through the justice system. Even when there is a conviction, we can't lock perpetrators up forever. So we need to find a way to change the abusive behaviours.

That's why programs like the Partner Assault Response Program are so important and why they must be a critical part of a sexual violence action plan. The Partner Assault Response Program is the only government-funded program designed to change abusive behaviours, and we have seen the Liberal government, basically, throw that program into chaos. Currently, the only way that abusers can access is it is through a court order. Abusers who don't like their abusive behaviour,

who want to change, do not have a way to voluntarily participate in the program. We saw the government arbitrarily reduce the length of the program from 16 weeks to 12 weeks, which was completely contrary to all of the advice that they received from experts, from front-line agencies, from Partner Assault Response Program provider organizations, from community leaders across the sector. They all said to the government, "Don't do that." We need a full and comprehensive review of the Partner Assault Response Program so that there are differentiated responses depending on the level of risk of the perpetrator and so that it is available for voluntary access.

Speaker, we welcome the amendments in Bill 132, but we are going to be pushing for a much more integrated, much more coordinated response to violence against women, sexual violence and domestic violence in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Questions or comments?

Ms. Harinder Malhi: First, I want to thank the member from London West for her comments. I had an opportunity to listen to them today and yesterday. After working with the member on the select committee, I want to say that I know the member made a number of references to what we learned from our deputations during the select committee. I completely value the work that we did as a committee. I understand how hard it was. It was very traumatic for a lot of us. There were a lot of sensitivities involved.

As I said yesterday when we spoke to this, what we learned during our select committee will not be undervalued. We will be taking those considerations as we move forward. We will continue to take some of that feedback to look at this. We will use it as a piece of information that is going to help us shape this plan even further. We're open to advice, we're open to taking that advice, we're open to listening to what the committee heard and to looking at the committee's recommendations as they come out on December 10.

This legislation is focused on sexual violence and harassment, not as much on the domestic aspect of it. We are specifically focusing on the four items on sexual violence and harassment, so we want to continue to keep that focus throughout this, because this is what we outlined in our plan as we started in March, when we started It's Never Okay.

When it comes to housing, we understand that there are affordability concerns. We understand there are underlying concerns. But what this does is, it gets the survivor out of a situation where they're not safe. It provides them with safety and security, and it also provides them with confidentiality. That's why it's going to be effective for those people.

Once again, I will say that all of your comments are well-taken. We will respect the work of the select committee and we will move forward, looking at that work and helping it inform our decisions going forward. I want to thank you for your remarks.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further questions and comments?

Ms. Laurie Scott: It is a pleasure to comment on my colleague from London West, who also sat on the select committee with us. We spent many months listening to people, travelling some of the province. I know that she was able to do 40 minutes yesterday and 20 minutes today. That's hard to do, so well done—a lot of very, very valid points. She has been a great asset to our committee, listening to the details, her past background and bringing that forward.

I certainly do appreciate a lot of the suggestions she has made to change the existing piece of legislation that's here before us today, which is Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. She touched on so many subjects, but I will do a couple of things.

The community agencies: I mentioned yesterday in my comments about the community hubs, so that's one place for these survivors to go to, to be able to navigate the support systems that do exist there now. So an integrated system is, for sure, what we heard is needed; and there are best practices that are out there.

She's correct about the ministry silos and funding. We can do a much better job of that, so that the money flows faster to the survivor, which will help. Of course, we always want to help increase the resources from the government for the best use to the survivors.

I want to compliment her on her work on the Partner Assault Response Program. That is a program that we've heard a lot of positive things about. Right now, it's court-mandated, and the fact is that the government has, really, thrown that program into chaos by reducing it from 16 weeks to 12 weeks for a supposed wait-list that we can't even find proof existed. There are still vacancies for that program. But also what we heard is that a lot of men are willing to go into it. Right now, you can only get into it if you're court-mandated. So I think we should look at that program, because we do want to change abusive behaviour.

Thank you to the member for the select committee and your comments today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's a real honour to be able to respond to the comments by my colleague the member for London West. I had the honour, as well, to sit on the select committee with some of my colleagues. I learned so much. We were certainly touched and affected by what we heard from those very brave deputants who came before us to share their stories and, also, to offer us guidance and advice and counsel on how we can make this province a better place and a safer place for victims and survivors of sexual assault, sexual violence and harassment.

My colleague, I would say, is certainly a leader in terms of addressing this specific issue. She showed leadership; she continues to do so just in the fact she has explained this bill, the nuances, so effectively and offered, again, some suggestions.

Particularly, I'd like to point out the shortfalls when it comes to protections under the Employment Standards Act and under workplace safety provisions. It is, in effect, akin to us not applying those universal precautionary provisions that we do with all other workplace safety issues. We treat them as though we should be taking universal precautions and offer every legislative protection that we can to ensure workers do not get harmed when they go to work. We should look at sexual violence and sexual harassment in the workplace through the same lens and offer, again, those same types of protections and safeguards and supports to prevent that from happening.

We see leadership, as my colleague mentioned, from provinces like Saskatchewan, who have made that a provision under their workplace safety regime, where mental strain and disabilities are viewed as such. We also see leadership coming from Manitoba in similar regards. So there is a road map for us.

I'm really proud to have joined my colleagues, and I look forward to continuing to strengthen the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further questions or comments?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm very pleased to support Bill 132. It's a very important piece of legislation which sends a very strong message that sexual violence and harassment is unacceptable anywhere in the province of Ontario. The overall intent of the bill is to have safer campuses, safer housing and safer workplaces. Parents and students will be so pleased to know that they will have peace of mind, knowing that there are stand-alone sexual violence policies in place and there is information available when they need it.

Similarly, it's very important to have safe workplaces to increase productivity, have improved health of employees and improved health of the community at large.

Mr. Speaker, it's very, very important that the community knows that the government is working for them, and it is one of our government's commitments to stop sexual violence and harassment.

I'm very pleased to share with this House that the post-secondary sector applauds this policy and has support for the government. Similarly, all the workers and all the tenants have it.

I appreciate the perspective from the members from London West, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Brampton-Springdale and Essex. Having listened to their perspectives, what I would say is that this piece of legislation is very essential, it is vital and it's a building block for an equitable society. This is a change that we should all support.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair now recognizes the member from London West for the wrap-up.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I want to thank the members for Brampton-Springdale, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Essex and Mississauga-Brampton South.

It is somewhat ironic to me that at the same time that we are talking about this legislation, Bill 132, which is no

doubt strong—it could be stronger, but as I said when I spoke to it yesterday, it's a good bill. However, we're dealing with it at the same time that the Partner Assault Response Program has been thrown into utter crisis. The Liberals are refusing to acknowledge the need for an integrated, coordinated approach that addresses both domestic violence and sexual violence.

The member for Brampton–Springdale talked about how the government wanted to totally separate domestic violence and sexual violence and only deal with sexual violence, but schedules 1, 2 and 6 deal with domestic violence. They recognize that domestic violence and sexual violence are very similar in terms of the impact on the survivor, the impact on the person who experiences these horrific crimes.

There are opportunities in the other sections of the act to do that same kind of integration—on the post-secondary side, schedules 3 and 5. We know that for post-secondary students, the majority of the sexual violence they experience on campus is in an intimate partner relationship. There should be provisions included in that bill to talk about intimate partner violence, not just sexual violence on campus.

I mentioned already the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Domestic violence is very present in workplaces in this province. We need to address that, too.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further debate?

Mr. Han Dong: I would like to share my time with the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the member from Beaches–East York and member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

First, let me recognize that this is a big problem. This is a big, hidden societal problem. I want to applaud the Premier for putting it on the front burner and making sure the government understands and everybody in this province understands that it's a big problem that is looking for a solution.

I also want to applaud the minister responsible for women's issues. She has worked long and hard in providing the leadership in her ministry to deliver, hopefully, some of the solutions to this problem.

I'm very fortunate that I was appointed to the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment; and through, I'd say, almost a year of working on the committee with members across the floor, I got valuable experience to travel across the province and listen to people from all sectors coming forward to tell us their stories. Sometimes it is unbelievable when they show you some of the stats. Now, we know what's happening on our campuses, what's happening in our workplaces, and that this bill is providing, if passed, some of the solutions. I think there is an urgency for the government to act on it.

1710
In my own riding of Trinity–Spadina, I visited a rape crisis centre and spoke to staff working there and they were telling me what's needed. What they were also telling me is that they were very happy that our government is actually looking into it and providing real action.

They also mentioned our sex education in our schools is providing a big role to teach kids what's okay, what's not okay, and starting the culture of consent. I think that is very, very important.

I believe that this bill covers a very important area, which is safer campuses. It requires our universities and colleges to come up with policies, with the help of students, to deal with, for example, training, prevention, complaint procedures and response protocols. I think that's very, very forward-looking.

I remember when I was in university. One night—I think it was like 1 o'clock in the morning—I got a call from a good friend of mine and she said, "I'm in trouble. Could you please come and see me?" When I got there, there were a couple of other friends. Unfortunately, she was a victim of sexual assault. She didn't know what to do. There was no information provided to her. She was here in Canada alone by herself. I didn't know what to do because we were never taught how to deal with these kinds of situations. There was no policy; there was no reaction plan established at the time. So we called the police. The police showed up and they took their report. All we could do was just stand there and provide support. We've all seen how hurtful and how harmful this is to any young woman's life. Fortunately, she was able to recover and walk out of that terrible, terrible experience.

As a parent, I'm very pleased to see the action the government is taking, and also the social media, the new tools that are available to us. We know that it got tremendous hits across the world. Now we're seen as the world leader on dealing with sexual violence and harassment. So I'm very pleased to support this bill and I urge the members of this House all to come together and support this initiative, because we know these actions are badly needed and we need these actions right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Dipika Damerla: I'm also pleased to join my colleagues the MPP for Trinity–Spadina, who spoke so eloquently, the MPP for Scarborough–Agincourt and the MPP for Beaches–East York, with whom I will be sharing my time on Bill 132, titled Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, 2015.

Mr. Speaker, I think we can all agree that over the past year, sexual assault and harassment have made headlines here in Ontario, in Canada and around the world. Public dialogue on this issue through mainstream and social media has elevated it to a level that far exceeds any point in our recent memory. I think the overwhelming message is that this behaviour has no place in our society and cannot be tolerated anymore.

This message was brought home to me in a really interesting way very recently. Like some of you in the Legislature, I like to watch *Scandal*. I don't know how many of you watch the show *Scandal*. It's something that I watch with my daughter. She's 17 years old, and that is our mother-daughter time together. We watch *Scandal* together. I always wait until the weekend and we watch it together.

Recently, in one of the episodes, my daughter said to me, “Mom, that’s sexual assault.” It just stopped me, because I thought that at her age, when I was 17, with that same scene on the TV show, I wouldn’t have given it that connotation because I hadn’t been socialized that way. It was so empowering to see my daughter at the age of 17 actually feel empowered enough and self-aware enough. She said to me, “No means no.”

I think that message is getting through to our kids and I think we can take a lot of comfort in the fact that the message is getting out, but we must do more, and that’s what this bill is about. This bill is about moving from the education part into the legislative framework to say that sexual harassment is never okay. It is in that spirit that I hope we can all support this bill.

In summary, what this bill tries to do is send a strong, positive message that asserts that sexual violence and sexual harassment are unacceptable everywhere, including workplaces. There is no limit to what we can achieve together. Building safer workplaces is a goal that I think we can all support. The legislative proposals would enhance employer requirements regarding workplace harassment programs and add specific new employer duties to protect workers from harassment in the workplace, including sexual harassment, and the duty to ensure that incidents and complaints are appropriately investigated.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this bill is really about showing leadership. I think it captures the essence of the ad that I think we’ve all seen and that has been such a successful educational tool, It’s Never Okay. It really captures the spirit of what we’re trying to do with this bill, which is that it is really never okay; sexual harassment is never okay.

I’m very pleased with and want to applaud the post-secondary sector, which has conveyed their support for these amendments and has already provided great leadership. We know that, if passed, this legislation would give many parents, including myself—my daughter is in grade 12 right now and will soon hopefully be off to university or college—peace of mind, knowing that stand-alone sexual violence policies are in place, help is on hand and information is readily available.

Thank you so much for your time. I’m pleased to share the rest of my time with my colleague MPP Potts.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair recognizes the member from Beaches–East York.

Mr. Arthur Potts: I’m delighted to be able to stand in the House today and speak on behalf of my constituency on this bill, because as the minister just talked about, it is never okay.

I’m absolutely proud to be part of a government that has come forward with an action plan that is recognizing the severity of the issues that we are facing in society, in the workplace and on campuses, and dealing with them directly.

This is, in a sense, the next major frontier that we are addressing as a society. I’m absolutely delighted that we’re trying to do it in a way that I’m seeing is so much less partisan—non-political—by engaging all members

of the House in the select action committee to do the rounds across the province, hear from the stakeholders and get a better sense so we could come forward—and we’ve heard the member from Kitchener Centre—

Ms. Peggy Sattler: London West.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Sorry, you’re London West. My apologies—London West, an unbelievably articulate, informed—I take such umbrage at the fact that you’re understanding it in a way that, in a sense, I never will.

I come—I think I’ve said it before—from a labour relations background, HR. I have a master’s degree from Queen’s. I used to actually go into corporations and teach HR policies on a regular basis. I would often see, so typically, that the HR policies that were being presented at corporate levels were coming forward from women, women consultants. It often used to take people a bit aback that I, as a male, would be there, deciding these policies. It shouldn’t have been, but that is part of the disconnect that we so often see.

As a male, I need as good a position to present and articulate a policy of why behaviour in the workplace is not okay. Men in workplaces who have come up and been acclimatized in an environment where they didn’t recognize what they were doing was wrong; sometimes it’s better to hear it from one of their own type.

1720

I had a lot of success going into corporations and was able to help them articulate a serious policy on sexual harassment in the workplace. That’s what I want to focus on mostly in my remarks on this bill. I think it’s very important that we’re codifying, in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, behaviour which typically would have been in the purview of a corporate policy; basically, often viewed as way of protecting a corporation from civil litigation. It’s the right thing to do in the workplace, but it wasn’t codified in the Occupational Health and Safety Act, as it will be now.

I think this goes a long way to normalizing why sexual harassment policies are absolutely critical and not simply a sign of a good, progressive employer, but an absolute necessity for all employers. As you get into a workplace, to have a written policy for sexual harassment is as important as having one for safety. To have it recognized under the Occupational Health and Safety Act—where there are expectations, opportunities for investigations, and fines and enforcement—reinforces that message why this is absolutely necessary across the board for all organizations, a written policy that is well communicated.

As caucus members, we’ve recently had an opportunity to have an expert come in and talk us to about the kinds of behaviours that we should be concerned about in our own workplaces, be it our constituency office or amongst our fellows in committees and all of the members of this House. It was a very important discussion that we would be, again, acclimatized. I’d like to think that for most of us, because we are progressive, socially conscious people, it may not have been as necessary as it may be in other workplaces, but, having said that, it’s a great reminder for all of us to take care.

Having a good communication policy around your written policy so people can go out in the workplace and understand that certain behaviours may seem all right to you but may not be well received by someone else was critically important. That takes place in the context of workplace training, as it does with safety.

As I said earlier, this is a bit of a frontier, not unlike the frontier we were at four years ago when we were combating racist policies in the workplace and in society in general. In a sense, when you see people marching down dark laneways in my community taking back the night to provide safety for women in our community—it's not unlike the kinds of demonstrations we saw from Rosa Parks in the Deep South, getting on a bus and refusing to move to the back of the bus—taking a stand to normalize what should be behaviour that we all accept as a matter of fundamental human respect for all of us, regardless of our gender, our sex, our colour, our religion, our creed. It's that measure of respect that I think is being codified back into this bill, which I'm extremely proud about.

I used to have the opportunity at Seneca College, while I was teaching students in the HRP program before them becoming professionals—we would have a chance to discuss all these different pieces of legislation. Back then, I wouldn't have been able to talk about sexual harassment policy within the Occupational Health and Safety Act because it didn't exist, but it will be there now and it will be part of that indoctrination that students in the Human Resources Professionals Association of Ontario policy will be getting in good measure.

By taking away the two-year limitation—this is so important. I know that the police have some discretion, that they work with victims of sexual assault in order to say, “You're not 100% sure about what happened. You're not comfortable because it may have been someone you know. If you want, we can put a warning, a notice on their record, and if there's a repeating behaviour, we'll see this repeating record and it will trigger an action,” which allows them to go back and lay charges two or three years later, which is important, so that there's some flexibility in how we respond to people who are victims of assault.

Keeping the opportunity for civil liability open longer is a healthy thing to do so that, as people have an opportunity, when they become more healthy, to deal with the issues affecting them, they then can come forward and take the appropriate measures.

With that, I will stop my remarks and leave it to my great friend from Scarborough—Agincourt to speak further on the subject.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair recognizes the member from Scarborough—Agincourt.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to rise this afternoon in support of Bill 132. I heard my colleagues from Beaches—East York and Trinity—Spadina and the associate minister speak passionately about this bill.

Let me pay tribute to Minister MacCharles, the minister responsible for bringing this bill, as well as my

colleague from Brampton-Springdale as her parliamentary assistant. At the end of the day, we need leadership to bring this kind of progressive legislation to this Legislature. I want to thank also our colleagues opposite in terms of participation on the select committee—they've done fabulous work and I'm looking forward to seeing their final report—as well as all the witnesses who came forward. I know they shared some very personal stories and they exhibited courage throughout their testimony.

There are six schedules for Bill 132. I want to highlight, specifically, schedule 3, because the associate minister talked about her own daughter, and other members have daughters right now who are recent graduates of universities or colleges or about to enter that particular post-secondary education, and I come from a riding in Scarborough—Agincourt with a number of keen, young students heading off to university very shortly. If this bill gets passed before the end of our session, it will have some meaningful effect on our young people.

Schedule 3 targets specifically amending the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act. It requires all colleges and universities to have a sexual violence policy. This policy cannot be developed without input from the students. This is critically important. This is a policy about students, so it's very important that the students have an active voice in this particular legislation.

More importantly, schedule 3 also requires every university and college to have disclosure of information: the number of incidents and complaints about sexual violence as well as reports by the students and information that's gathered need to be shared. We know that young students, when they are choosing different colleges and universities, will go the university website or the college website and they will be looking at different data before determining which college or which university to register at.

The other piece of the legislation is in respect to the regulations. Under section 9 of schedule 3, it does allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council to make regulations with respect to sexual violence involving students. That way, different regulations can be introduced from time to time to reflect the needs of that community across our post-secondary school communities.

At the end of the day, this legislation, if passed, will ensure comprehensive delivery of the issue of sexual violence and harassment, both in the workplace and in post-secondary institutions. As a former nursing professor before I came here to the House—just recently I visited Humber College. I want to shout out to those students; I know they're getting ready for exams. This legislation is about them. I'm looking forward to when this legislation goes to second reading and we get some witnesses coming forward from different colleges and universities, and we hear their input, especially pertaining to schedule 3.

The other piece of the legislation is about ensuring some implementation, ensuring some educational awareness. The bill sets forth that, if this legislation is passed, it will take effect six months after royal assent, allowing

the minister to work with post-secondary institutions to have some education and awareness campaigns so that there will be transitional, informational and training pieces. At the end of the day, you don't want to pass legislation and put it into force the next day. I think this is a very, very important piece of legislation for protecting young people but also ensuring that our campuses are safe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Questions or comments?

Ms. Laurie Scott: I think four members spoke. I know, obviously, that the member from Scarborough–Agincourt just spoke, the member from Trinity–Spadina spoke, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care spoke, and the minister from—

Mr. Arthur Potts: Minister?

Interjection: Beaches–East York.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Oh, I'm promoting you. The member from Beaches–East York.

First of all, thank you all for speaking to Bill 132, the action plan that was introduced by the government. I appreciate the fact that some of the members were on the select committee and some subbed into the select committee at times. I appreciate their input and what they heard.

The bill encompasses a lot of pieces of legislation and many spoke to it. My former nursing colleague, as we were both nurses in our previous lives, certainly spoke about amending the act for training, colleges and universities, and having input from the students, and the training that's involved in building up a plan. I have to tell you that the colleges were right there—I think almost on the first or second day of hearings—with a comprehensive template for a plan for all of their colleges, and I thank them for that. The universities have certainly come on board. We've heard from colleges and universities, as well as their associations, before the committee, with their recommendations—and student involvement in all of them. We really appreciate that because we need to do a lot better on our college and university campuses.

1730

I know a lot has been said about the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and I think those are going to be positive steps. We're going to consult widely—I was assured when we went for the ministerial briefing—with businesses to make sure we all get on the same page and it's a co-operative arrangement in the training that needs to occur; the changes to define sexual harassment separately that this piece of legislation does affect.

Mr. Speaker, there are lots of pieces to this legislation. I'm happy the government brought it forward, and I'm happy that they're accepting some of our proposed amendments, in theory anyway, so far.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Questions or comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I am pleased to rise, on behalf of the people I represent in London West, to make some comments on the remarks that were given to us by the members on the government side.

In particular, I wanted to focus on the comments from the member for Scarborough–Agincourt and also the member for Beaches–East York. Both of them, in their speeches, talked about the need for training. Certainly, on the post-secondary side, we know that there are going to be new obligations for post-secondary institutions to address incidents of sexual violence on campus but also to adequately support the victim. This is going to require training and also resources. I think it's very important that the new requirements that are set out in Bill 132 are properly resourced by the government—resources for implementation, but also resources to enable institutions to do the training that's necessary.

The member for Beaches–East York focused more on the Occupational Health and Safety Act amendments. I want to go back to what I said in my speech. We have to remember that Bill 168—the previous set of amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act—was introduced because of domestic violence that followed workers into the workplace. We need to introduce some amendments to schedule 4 in Bill 132 to recognize that domestic violence in the workplace has an impact on worker productivity, on worker health and on safety risks for other workers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair recognizes the member from Etobicoke–Lake-shore.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: It really is an honour to rise to make some comments on Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Plan Act, and to comment on the remarks from the member from Trinity–Spadina, the Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and the members from Beaches–East York, Scarborough–Agincourt, Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, and London West. And the member for London West certainly spoke very eloquently this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, as a son, as a husband, as the father of a young daughter, this is so incredibly important—and I'm truly honoured to be part of a body where all members of the Legislature have come together on this issue. This is not a political issue. This is a human issue about the women and men throughout Ontario and the support we're going to give them.

As the father of a young daughter, I look forward to the fact that she and her friends, male and female, as they grow up, will be inoculated, to an extent, to understand what is truly appropriate and inappropriate behaviour; to be able to identify when there is sexually improper language or conduct directed at them or their friends. That's going to make for a much healthier environment for them to learn in, to live in and work in. I think this shift in our society to really address this, to do it openly and honestly, and say that there is no tolerance for sexual harassment or assault in any venue, be it at home, at work, or at school.

This is a good thing. I think this will go down as one of the proudest moments of all members of this Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further questions and comments? The Chair recognizes the member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you very much, and may I say, Mr. Speaker, you look very good in that chair. I hope you don't take it in the wrong way, considering that we're colleagues and this is our workplace.

We're hearing a lot today about sexual violence and harassment and assault, and the discussion tends to be focused on women. I think that we recognize that it is a serious issue for women. Today we are recognizing and commemorating—I think December 6, actually, is the day that 14 women were murdered at École Polytechnique: engineering students, strong women, smart women, capable women, and they were gunned down for exactly those reasons. But there is a violence and harassment and assault against men, whether it's by other men, whether it's by women, whether it's employers, whether it's in class. They cannot be forgotten as well. They are victims as well.

As the member opposite just said, it's about—he used the word “inoculating,” I believe—empowering our kids. When I look at the pages who are here working with us and working together, boys and girls, co-operating, and the way they sort of whisper and signal to each other to be co-operative, I think that this is actually one of the best training grounds for youth. If we could only get every student in Ontario to come down and do this program, wouldn't it be amazing for them?

I can just see the way you are respectful to each other, and at that age, so often—certainly when I was a kid—the girls would have been all sitting on one side and the boys on the other, and we wouldn't have been interacting as nicely as you are. So I really want to applaud you. I hope you're listening today to this discussion, because I think that this is something that—if you get to go back and talk to your classmates and your friends and your family about something that you learned in the Legislature, that you were able to understand, I think this is it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The wrap-up comments. The member from Scarborough—Agincourt.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to do the final wrap-up on this particular round of debate. I want to thank the members from Trinity-Spadina, Beaches-East York, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, London West, Etobicoke-Lakeshore, and Thornhill. I want to thank all the members, because as the member from Etobicoke-Lakeshore said earlier, this particular piece of legislation is for the entire province, regardless of gender.

I think the member from Thornhill hit it on the nail, because it's not just about women being sexually harassed and sexual violence against women. We heard last year, when we were doing pre-budget consultations, that some men have been sexually harassed and there was violence against them as well.

I know the member from London West's comment and concern about the whole issue of training—I want to refer to schedule 3, subsection (9), (d) and (e). They make reference to the fact that colleges and universities will require appropriate support services and accommo-

dations. I think that whole issue about training and support is really critical. It's actually clearly stated in sections (d) and (e) of the proposed legislation.

I totally agree with her comments with regard to the whole issue of training and support, because as a former nurse—and my colleague opposite will know what I'm talking about—when you have a victim who has been traumatized, has been severely affected by a critical incident, immediate support is critical.

At the end of the day, I believe the proposed legislation is a first step, but follow-up to the legislation's programs and services must be there to support that victim, but also the support of family, whether it is classroom students or the peers amongst them.

I think this is very important legislation and I hope it gets to committee soon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Further debate?

Mr. Robert Bailey: Right off the get-go, I'd like to indicate that I'm going to be sharing my time with the member from Thornhill.

Hon. James J. Bradley: You should get a question.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Well, certainly. The minister suggests I get a question—maybe on Monday.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to add my voice to Bill 132, the sexual harassment plan, 2015. This is a very important topic we are discussing, one that impacts every riding and community in our great province.

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In my riding, there are a number of very important resources in the community for survivors of sexual violence and harassment. I would like to begin my comments today by recognizing the tremendous impact they make in our community. Organizations such as the Family Counselling Centre, the Sexual Assault Survivors' Centre, Victim Services of Sarnia-Lambton, Family Law Education for Women, the Assaulted Women's Helpline, the Ontario Network for Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Treatment Centres, our police service, and the Women's Interval Home all play a very significant role in supporting survivors of sexual violence, but more can be done.

Recently in Sarnia, there was a very high-profile murder trial that dealt with these very issues of sexual violence and harassment and establishing safety for survivors. What transpired in Sarnia should never have happened. I support any work by this Legislature, by any member, to try to address these issues head-on.

As such, I would like to thank the minister responsible for women's issues for introducing Bill 132. This bill is a step in the right direction for our government and our province and reflective of the very important work that the Legislature has been doing on the issue of sexual violence and harassment.

I would like to take the time to recognize all the members of this Legislature and support staff who sat as members of the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment this past spring as it travelled around the province, discussing the very subject of this bill.

I would also like to pay special tribute to my colleague the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, who moved an opposition day motion in this Legislature on November 26, 2014, calling on this Legislature to establish a select committee to travel the province and study the issue of sexual violence and harassment. That motion was, of course, debated and carried unanimously, which led to the great work that this committee completed earlier this year.

I had the opportunity and privilege to sit on this committee as it travelled to southwestern Ontario and held meetings in Windsor. I learned a lot about sexual violence and harassment and many of the contributing factors from my time on that committee. Even before the committee sat, I was confronted with the realization that the issue is far more widespread than one might assume. The briefing package that the Committee Clerk sent over in advance of the meeting in Windsor referenced dozens of media stories from around that time, detailing various accusations of sexual assault and charges brought against individuals—some, I might add, in professional positions in the very communities that the committee was visiting.

One of the primary topics of discussion at the committee hearings was the emerging issue of human trafficking in Ontario. Human trafficking, often described as a form of modern-day slavery, is a violation of human rights and affects men, women and children. It is a very unique crime in that the commodity, the victim, can be trafficked over and over again over many years.

This province, I'm ashamed to say, is home to the largest number of domestic human trafficking cases, where victims are born and raised right here in Ontario. These victims are manipulated by their traffickers and removed from their normal life. We always think of people who are victims of this sexual slavery as probably being new immigrants or people new to this country, but a number of them are born and raised here—second and third generation.

Typically, by forcing victims to perform sexual services, traffickers earn between \$500 and \$1,000 per day, keeping all of those proceeds. Victims of human trafficking often suffer physical or psychological abuse and live and work in horrific conditions. They may also face fatal consequences if they attempt to escape.

According to the RCMP, 11 police agencies in Ontario collectively laid human trafficking-specific charges in 78 cases between 2007 and 2014. The majority of these cases, of course, were from the greater Toronto area, the GTA: approximately 75%; in the Golden Horseshoe, 15%. Peel region and the city of Toronto are the most common regions within the GTA to which victims were moved. Unlike the fight to combat child exploitation and gang violence, there is no coordinated, provincially funded network of officers, prosecutors and courtrooms dedicated exclusively to combat human trafficking.

No local statistics are currently available regarding the prevalence of human trafficking activities in Sarnia–Lambton, but anecdotal evidence collected by local agencies like the Sarnia police and the Sarnia–Lambton

Committee Against the Trafficking of Women and Children show that this is happening locally. The Sarnia Police Service has taken proactive measures and already has officers on the force trained to identify the signs of someone who may be involved in this growing problem.

We spend a lot of time, Mr. Speaker, in this Legislature discussing issues that, while important, pale in comparison to the seriousness of the growth of something as reprehensible as human trafficking in our province.

I was looking through my records in my riding recently and found a statement that I made in this House in 2010 on a local group from my community that was rallying to draw awareness to this issue. I certainly hope that as we are discussing this issue today, in another five years, we will have perhaps erased this scourge and this shameful practice, educated the public and stopped this sort of practice from happening in the first place.

As such, I look forward to the recommendations from the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment, which will be reporting on December 10.

I know that our caucus, as well as the third party, has a number of amendments that we would like to see included in the bill in some form. I'm sure that, as I say, the third party also has amendments that could improve this legislation.

Part of the bill will require universities to seek student input on policy development as we try to institute programs at universities and educational institutions. As the minister noted in her comments, campus life is supposed to be a special and enjoyed occasion in a student's life. It shouldn't be spent in fear or apprehension.

Bill 132 will also amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include a definition of "workplace sexual harassment." It will require employers to address all complaints of workplace harassment, including sexual harassment, and make reasonable efforts to ensure that the workplace is harassment-free at all times. It would amend the Private Career Colleges Act to make sure that these organizations also create a sexual violence policy.

Finally, Bill 132 will also amend the Residential Tenancies Act to shorten the notice period to 28 days to terminate a lease where the tenant or a child with whom the tenant resides is fleeing domestic or sexual violence.

Again, I commend the minister for the changes that have been included in Bill 132 to the various pieces of legislation. As the bill passes through various stages, I believe there are many amendments that can be made to bolster and make an impact on this legislation.

First and foremost, I believe that this government should move to implement the motion put forward by the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock to form a provincial anti-human trafficking task force. As I mentioned earlier, the issue of human trafficking is one that has been growing in our communities for the last number of years. In my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, the Sarnia Police Service has already trained officers to better recognize the signs of human trafficking. Furthermore, the Sarnia–Lambton Committee Against the

Trafficking of Women and Children has held a number of conferences to help raise awareness of the presence of this issue in our community.

Right now, statistics on the prevalence of human trafficking are hard to come by because the signs aren't always clear. Police interacting with individuals involved with human trafficking may focus charges on many of the activities that go along with human trafficking, such as assaults, weapons charges or drug trafficking.

However, at the select committee hearings earlier this year, the committee heard ample testimony about the violent and often hidden reality of human trafficking in Ontario. Legal Assistance of Windsor presented testimony—and I'll just go over a little bit of it—about how the web of human trafficking is everywhere. This is included on page 11 of the interim report:

"She was recruited by a friend over Facebook at 16 years old. She was told by a girlfriend that she had met in a group home that the girl's boyfriend's friend liked her pictures and that he wanted to meet her. After texts and phone calls with the young man, she agreed to meet him. For over two months, she was forced to prostitute in cities across our province and service between seven and 10 men a day...."

It is truly disturbing to know that this is happening across Ontario as we speak here today. Something needs to be done, and I believe the amendments in this bill support the work, and they're a great place to start. We need to establish a human trafficking advisory committee and a help line, enact legislative changes to protect victims of human trafficking and create a task force to address trafficking, as put forward by MPP Laurie Scott.

Moreover, the PC caucus would like to see the government adopt an amendment that would restore the Partner Assault Response Program back to a 16-week model and provide more funding to eliminate the wait-lists for PAR.

PAR aims to help offenders take responsibility and ownership of their behaviour. The program aims at improving victim safety. Unfortunately, the government made the decision to cut the length of this program from 16 weeks to 12 because of the current backlog of offenders on the wait-list. Many involved with the program are concerned that the changes will serve to water down the program, effectively putting victims of sexual violence at greater risk rather than increasing their safety. Our caucus would like to see this changed.

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In addition, my caucus colleagues also mentioned the need for the government to look at what can be done to better monitor high-risk offenders from further victimizing the survivors of sexual violence and harassment. The stats say that Ontario's 800 probation and parole officers deal with over 51,000 offenders. Simple math says that this is 64 parolees for each officer, and it's not tenable. The government needs to review whether it is reasonable to expect one officer to manage that number of individuals, especially if they have a high number of high-risk individuals on their caseload.

If the government is going to convince survivors of sexual violence and harassment to come forward and tell their stories so that offenders can be held accountable, then this government needs to do more to ensure that survivors can be protected from their attackers when they are released from custody. My caucus colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has introduced Bill 130, An Act to amend the Ministry of Correctional Services Act in respect of parole, in order to address shortfalls in the way the government currently allocates resources to monitor high-risk offenders. Bill 130 should be passed by this government.

In conclusion, Bill 132 is a good start by this government, and I commend the minister for bringing this legislation forward, but there are additional improvements that can be made and should be made to further protect Ontarians from sexual violence and harassment. I hope that the government will be open to suggestions from the opposition and those by the third party, especially those brought forward by our critic for women's issues, the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. She has done a tremendous amount of work on these issues, as all members of this committee have, and has many good ideas that could be incorporated into Bill 132 at the committee stage.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): The Chair recognizes the member from Thornhill.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to rise today and speak on Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act. I just want to mention, once again, that today we are commemorating violence against women because December 6 is the anniversary of 14 women who were murdered at École Polytechnique just because they were women. This year it's the 26th anniversary. It sometimes gets harder to commemorate, but for those of us from Montreal—I remember it well. It was just before I moved here, and it's still a troublesome memory for me.

I'm going to tell a little story here that was printed in the Toronto Star on November 7, 2014. Deborah was a 39-year-old single mother. She took a job tending a bar in Ajax. It wasn't long before the 66-year-old owner began to express a romantic interest in her and asking her out on dates and commenting about her looks and her dress and touching her and making suggestive and—I guess "lewd advances" to her would be the correct term.

It's hard to understand how people can feel comfortable treating another human being this way. We are all, after all, human beings. It doesn't matter our gender; it doesn't matter our age, what sexual orientation we have, what culture, what background, where we were born, what languages we speak. We are all human beings, and sometimes I think that people have more respect for animals in our society than they do for fellow human beings.

It's very disheartening when you hear stories of people who say they don't want to take public transit because they've had such bad experiences. I've had a few bad

experiences myself on public transit, and I'm very cautious and very alert and often not that comfortable, to tell you the truth. But we do want to encourage the public to take public transit and we cannot see the results that we need if people aren't comfortable.

We too often ignore that there's a relationship between sexual harassment—maybe it starts with just a little bullying and teasing, and escalates. It's often in a grey zone of what some people would call fun. I don't want people to be overly sensitive. I don't think I'm an overly sensitive person. I can certainly handle some jokes, but I think that there is a line that too often is crossed. If we ignore sexual harassment—and that's something that we really didn't touch on this afternoon. If we ignore, things can escalate, just as we hear oftentimes that people who have murdered a human being have killed animals. So we must recognize that we have to condition our children from an early age; we have to make them aware. We have to ensure that newcomers to our country, to our society, are aware of our values and that everyone feels comfortable—not just to go on public transit, but to say something if they've had a bad experience.

We can't make everybody comfortable everywhere. There are going to be people who are not going to necessarily follow the rules. We can pass laws, we can pass legislation here in the House, but unfortunately, too often people do not recognize the importance of the laws, they might not even be aware of the laws, and maybe they don't have the strong enough ethics and moral fibre to uphold the laws.

We cannot ensure, as I said, that these incidents don't happen, but it's for us to ensure not just that the victims are comfortable to go to police—because that's really the end of the line—but that people feel comfortable to turn to the perpetrator and say, no. And too often, people do not. We say afterwards—as we've all experienced times where somebody was difficult to us or we felt pressured or bullied somehow—when we're in our car or later at night, we say, "Oh, I should have said this. I have such a great comeback," after the fact. But when you're in that emotional turmoil, that heated situation, it's very hard to have that comeback.

Maybe we have to teach our kids when they're young, at home, at school, to say no. Even if they say no to their parents sometimes—I'm a parent; it's hard to accept when your child says no to you. But do you know what? I was always glad and I'm glad today when my kids stand up to me and say "No, I'm not doing that. I'm changing my course. I'm changing my job," and they stand up for themselves. Of course, initially, I find that a little difficult, but I know that I'm doing the right thing when my children are able to say no to their parents, say no to their friends, and maybe say no to their employers if they have to, and their colleagues and their teachers.

It's the end of the day, and we've heard a lot about sexual harassment and sexual violence, and I think that we do have support here in the House to ensure that there is very strong legislation, to ensure that everyone feels safe at school, at work, on our streets, on our public

transit and, yes, we want people to be safe in their homes as well.

We want everyone to feel safe: women, men—no matter what your sexual orientation or identity may be. We want everyone to feel welcomed, to feel valued and to feel comfortable, and to be able to advocate for themselves. Because there aren't enough police officers, there aren't enough counsellors, there aren't enough legislators to take care of everybody on a one-to-one basis. We have to ensure we're giving people the skills and the ability to deal with some of the things themselves.

I'm just going to mention a very quick story, on a personal note: When I was in optometry school and I was graduating—I was only 22 years old—I was told by a professor who has since departed—he was a great professor, but let's just say that he was from another generation, or two or three or four. He said to me, "You know, I hope you don't get your hopes up too high and don't be too disappointed because I don't think many people are going to want to go to see a female optometrist. They'll prefer a male optometrist." Well, Mr. Speaker, if somebody would have hit me, it would have been easier to take. It was very hard to take. I have to credit my parents for raising me to be tough; I didn't get disheartened by his words. I remember seeing him at a reunion and saying, "Dr. Whatever, I have news for you: I'm one of the busiest from the graduating class."

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and everybody have a safe ride home.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in her office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement pour exiger une cessation de l'utilisation du charbon pour produire de l'électricité dans les installations de production.

An Act to amend the Development Charges Act, 1997 and the Planning Act / Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur les redevances d'aménagement et la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire.

An Act to strengthen and improve government by amending or repealing various Acts / Loi visant à renforcer et à améliorer la gestion publique en modifiant ou en abrogeant diverses lois.

An Act to amend the Condominium Act, 1998, to enact the Condominium Management Services Act, 2015

and to amend other Acts with respect to condominiums /
Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur les condominiums,
édicte la Loi de 2015 sur les services de gestion de
condominiums et modifiant d'autres lois en ce qui
concerne les condominiums.

An Act to amend the Energy Consumer Protection
Act, 2010 and the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Loi
modifiant la Loi de 2010 sur la protection des
consommateurs d'énergie et la Loi de 1998 sur la
Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

An Act respecting police record checks / Loi
concernant les vérifications de dossiers de police.

An Act to enact the Representation Act, 2015, repeal
the Representation Act, 2005 and amend the Election
Act, the Election Finances Act and the Legislative
Assembly Act / Loi édicte la Loi de 2015 sur la
représentation électorale, abrogeant la Loi de 2005 sur la
représentation électorale et modifiant la Loi électorale, la
Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi sur
l'Assemblée législative.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ernie Hardeman): Thank
you. It being 6 o'clock, this House stands adjourned until
December 7 at 10:30.

The House adjourned at 1802.

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Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
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McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
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Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
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Thibeault, Glenn (LIB)	Sudbury	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakubski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Whitby–Oshawa	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Présidente: Cheri DiNovo
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Cheri DiNovo
Han Dong, Michael Harris
Sophie Kiwala, Todd Smith
Monique Taylor
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques

Chair / Présidente: Soo Wong
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Peter Z. Milczyn
Laura Albanese, Yvan Baker
Toby Barrett, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Ann Hoggarth
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Joe Dickson
Mike Colle, Grant Crack
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala
Jim McDonell, Eleanor McMahon
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: John Fraser
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Cristina Martins
Robert Bailey, Vic Dhillon
John Fraser, Wayne Gates
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Cristina Martins, Randy Pettapiece
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Bob Delaney
Randy Hillier, Michael Mantha
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadri
Laurie Scott
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative

Chair / Président: Monte McNaughton
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Jack MacLaren
Granville Anderson, Bas Balkissoon
Chris Ballard, Steve Clark
Jack MacLaren, Michael Mantha
Eleanor McMahon, Monte McNaughton
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé

Chair / Présidente: Indira Naidoo-Harris
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Kathryn McGarry
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Jennifer K. French
Monte Kwinter, Amrit Mangat
Kathryn McGarry, Indira Naidoo-Harris
Daiene Vernile, Bill Walker
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Christopher Tyrell

Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de la politique sociale

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Jagmeet Singh
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon
Amrit Mangat, Gila Martow
Kathryn McGarry, Norm Miller
Jagmeet Singh, Peter Tabuns
Glenn Thibeault
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment / Comité spécial de la violence et du harcèlement à caractère sexuel

Chair / Présidente: Daiene Vernile
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laurie Scott
Han Dong, Sylvia Jones
Marie-France Lalonde, Harinder Malhi
Kathryn McGarry, Eleanor McMahon
Taras Natyshak, Peggy Sattler
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